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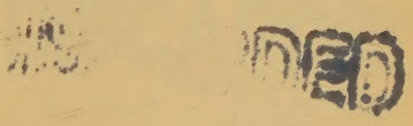

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SIDE LIGHTS

ON

AMERICAN HISTORY

BY

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"WHAT TO READ," ETC.

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VOLUME I

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PREFACE

HISTORY can be presented to us only by means of pictures, reproductions of that which we cannot directly witness.

If you study a city from photographs, the general bird's-eye view is necessary to give you the relative size and location of things; but such a view is not enough. You must have pictures, on a larger scale, of a busy street, a mammoth office building, a public park, the interior of a workshop, and the like. The ordinary school history furnishes the bird's-eye view of our country's origin and growth; the present volume aims to give a more detailed account — a picture on a larger scale — of some of the chief events in our history. It is intended not to replace the text-book, but to supplement it.

The text-book gives the succession of events and, in some measure, their relative importance; but, owing to the multitude of subjects to be

treated within the limits of a small volume, none can be exhaustively dealt with. It is impossible for any writer, however skilful, to relate historical facts in a form so condensed as that of the average text-book, and at the same time to give them that living interest so necessary in holding the attention of young readers. The text-book is useful and indispensable; it is the index that points to the vast wealth of knowledge that may be found in our historical literature; it furnishes the groundwork on which rests the entire structure of historic knowledge. But unfortunately the text-book too often is little more than a chronicle of events, an array of dates and facts, a skeleton without flesh, without life, without soul. Such a book is ill adapted to awaken an interest in historical study, and can be used successfully in the schools only in connection with other works as supplementary reading. Used in this way the skeleton of the text-book may be clothed with flesh and have breathed into it the breath of life.

Our learned and more exhaustive historical works are beyond the reach of most busy peo-

ple, nor are they adapted to use in the schools. Between these two extremes, the condensed text-book and the ponderous volumes of the historian, we find many books of great value — biographies, memoirs, histories of limited periods or of particular localities — but none of these, as far as the author knows, is fitted for the use of schools or was prepared with that end in view.

This work covers a field not hitherto covered. It has been written for the general reader, as well as for use in schools of the grammar-school grade and of the grades immediately above it. It is hoped that the book may also be found a pleasant review to the busy teacher, who has many things to teach and who finds it impossible to become a specialist in everything.

The period covered is the first seventy years of our national history; but no attempt to give a connected history of that period has been made. At the same time much care has been taken to show the bearing of one great event upon another, their causes and results, and the part each bore in making our civilization what it is.

The subjects treated in the various chapters have been selected with the utmost care. The aim has been to choose out, not the dramatic and exciting, but the strategic points, the pivots on which the ponderous machinery of our history has turned. This is true of most of the chapters. A few, however, such as "Washington's Inauguration," "Conspiracy of Aaron Burr," "The Campaign of 1840," and the "Underground Railroad," have been chosen with a view of picturing the state of society at the time treated.

In order that every important aspect of our national growth be presented to the reader, the subjects chosen are as unlike in character as practicable, and the events have been related with greater detail than is possible in the ordinary school history. This has been done at the sacrifice of leaving out many subjects of almost equal importance with those selected. Minor incidents and details in history, often insignificant in themselves, are, like illustrations in a sermon or lecture, useful for the light they throw on more important matters.

The authorities consulted in preparing this

work are far more numerous than indicated in the foot-note references. Those given are chiefly the works most likely to be accessible to the reader who may be stimulated to further research.

H. W. E.

PHILADELPHIA, PA.,
May, 1899.

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SIDE LIGHTS
ON AMERICAN HISTORY

SIDE LIGHTS ON AMERICAN HISTORY

CHAPTER I

Declaration of Independence

It is generally considered that the most important single event in the history of this Western World is the adopting of the Declaration of Independence, at Philadelphia, by the Continental Congress, on July 4, 1776. This was the crowning act of the Revolution; without it there would have been no Revolution.

The word "revolution," when used in a political sense, means a fundamental change of government. If, therefore, the colonists had not succeeded in gaining their freedom and changing their form of government, the war would be known in history as simply a rebellion.

The Declaration of Independence did not win independence; it was simply an act of Congress, declaring what the people desired, what they felt of right belonged to them, what they determined to fight for. They all knew that it would require long years of bloody war to achieve their object. But it is true that the time of deciding, of determining on any act, is the supreme moment. All the effort that may follow in carrying out the decision, is, compared with the decision itself, as the body to the soul. The moment the colonists decided on independence was the supreme moment of the Revolution; and the declaring of that decision may rightly be deemed an event of such far-reaching importance that nothing else in American History can be compared with it.

Our school histories all tell something about this Declaration of Independence; but they have so many things to tell that only a short space can be given even to such an event. What schoolboy or schoolgirl would not like to know more of this Declaration — how it was brought about, and who did most to bring

it about? Let us devote this chapter to the subject.

We celebrate the Fourth of July as our National Birthday; but the 2d of July was the real original Independence day. John Adams wrote on the evening of July 2, 1776: "This day will be the most memorable in the history of America; to be celebrated by succeeding generations as the great anniversary festival, commemorated as the day of deliverance, by solemn acts of devotion to God Almighty, from one end of the continent to the other, from this time forward forevermore."

The Declaration of Independence was not the result of a sudden burst of enthusiasm, finding expression in a rash act of Congress; it was a growth, a deliberate step of the whole people.

Love of the Colonists for England

The filial love of the colonists for England was very strong. The intensity of that love seems remarkable when we consider that most of the Americans were native born, few had

ever seen England, and the ancestors of many had been driven from that country on account of their religion. Yet their hope of reconciliation with the King was deep-seated; at the beginning of the war few indeed thought of independence, and when it first began to be talked about, it was very unpopular.

In November, 1775, five months after the battle of Bunker Hill, the legislature or assembly of Pennsylvania instructed its delegates in Congress "to dissent from and utterly reject any propositions, should such be made, that may cause or lead to a separation from our mother country."[1]

The legislature of New Jersey followed a few weeks later in almost the same language. In December the Maryland convention declared that the people of that province "never did nor do entertain any views or desires on independency." New York and Delaware followed with similar statements; and we hear the same voice from the provincial congresses of New Hampshire and North Carolina.

[1] See Frothingham's "Rise of the Republic," p. 466.

George Washington wrote a letter the preceding year, in which we find this expression, "I am well satisfied that no such thing as independence is desired by any thinking man in all North America." Years later he said that when he took command of the army at Boston he still abhorred the idea of independence. Many more examples could be given, but these show the general feeling during the first year of the Revolutionary War.

At the same time there were a few men, who, from the beginning, seemed to foresee the end, and these were unwearied in their efforts to attain that end. Joseph Warren of Massachusetts, the patriot-hero who gave his life for the cause at Bunker Hill, used these prophetic words at the beginning of the war, "America must and will be free; the contest may be severe; the end will be glorious." Samuel Adams, the most intimate friend of Warren, and James Otis of the same colony were among the few earliest leaders for independence. But, as stated above, the great mass of the people clung to the mother country with childlike affection, and frowned upon

every suggestion of a separation. How, then, came the spirit of independence to take possession of the American heart? The fact is the people were driven and goaded to do as they did. No other course was left them but abject servitude.

Causes that led to Independence

We wonder more at the slowness than at the haste of the colonists to seize the great prize. After being insulted with the hated Stamp Act, the Mutiny Act, the Boston Port Bill, and other indignities, they still longed for a reconciliation with England. Their petitions to the King were full of undeserved and almost fulsome praise for his Majesty, while they blamed Parliament for all the trouble. But this was all changed within a year. Their yearning for a reconciliation was changed to a determination never to be reconciled. No longer did they deal with Parliament; they ignored the crouching whelps, and grappled with the old lion himself. What brought about this great change? The chief causes are few.

First: The reception of the last petition to the King. This petition was agreed on by Congress in midsummer, 1775. It had been suggested by John Jay of New York, and drawn up by John Dickinson of Pennsylvania, both eminent men, true patriots, but wholly averse at that time to independence. The petition expressed the tenderest regard for the person of the King; it recited the wrongs that the colonists had endured; it then begged in the most respectful language that these wrongs be righted, that the old-time harmony be restored, so that the Americans could live in happiness and contentment under the British flag. The petition was sent to the King by a special messenger, Richard Penn, who was a Tory. Penn hastened away with high hopes, and the hopes of America went with him. He reached London late in August. America waited breathless for the result. The eyes of all turned almost appealingly toward England.

The answer came late in October. It astonished everybody. The King had declined to receive the petition at all, and refused to

see the messenger that brought it! Sadly the people heard the news, and their sadness was mingled with anger and resentment. King George III. had thus taken a fatal step toward estranging forever his subjects in the Western Hemisphere.

Second: The King's proclamation. On the next day after the result of the petition was published in the Philadelphia newspapers, the King's proclamation was laid before the American public. In this document King George had declared the colonists in a state of rebellion, and no longer under his protection. This was another stunning blow. The people were exasperated in the extreme. The King expected to frighten them into submission, but the opposite effect resulted. Independence, that had been only whispered here and there, was now talked of openly on all sides.

Congress assumed a bolder tone. It answered the King's proclamation, almost defiantly. It appointed committees to correspond with foreign nations, and talked no more reconciliation, nor put forth disclaimers of independence. This was in the first part of

November, 1775, and from this day forward the united colonies took no step backward in the great march toward freedom. King George had made another blunder — had taken another fatal step.

Third: The employment of foreign aid. The King of England sent an army of foreigners, known as Hessians, hired for the purpose, into the colonies to fight against his own subjects! Nor was this all; he stirred up the savage Indians against the Americans whenever possible, knowing full well that warfare with them meant the murdering of the innocent — the mother and the babe — in addition to ordinary warfare. The cruel murder of hundreds of innocent men, women, and children along the frontier during the Revolution must be laid at the door of George the Third.

The colonists were now convinced that their sovereign did not love them. He cared for America only from selfish motives, only for what he could make out of it for commerce and taxation. Could the Americans, as a self-respecting people, continue their allegiance to

such a man, and to the country of which he was the sovereign?

Progress toward Independence

As soon as the full meaning of the attitude of the obstinate King had taken hold of the public mind, the air was filled with shouts of defiance, and calls for independence. The people discussed the subject in town meetings, on the streets, in the fields, and at their firesides. The belief everywhere was that a reconciliation was impossible, and submission meant slavery. The spirit of independence spread from New England to Georgia, and took a powerful hold upon the people. It is true, the feeling was not unanimous. There were many Tories to the end; and even of the Whigs, especially in the middle colonies, many hesitated and counselled delay. But the great body of the people came to favor, during the winter and following spring, a final break with England.

Public opinion was moulded largely by the newspapers and by pamphlets. A pamphlet, called "Common Sense," written by Thomas

Paine, converted thousands. A great speech of Patrick Henry before the Virginia Convention was published broadcast, and became a powerful force in moulding the public mind.

But the man who stood first among the leaders of public opinion was Samuel Adams of Massachusetts. Adams was a man of broad views and of the purest motives. He had been among the few who foresaw the end from the beginning. From the first he had opposed all petitions to the throne, and nothing made him happier than the contempt with which the King received them, for in this he saw independence. He believed in a glorious future for America; but first the colonies must be free from England, and to attain that end he ceased not to labor day and night, until the object of his heart was won. May the name of Samuel Adams ever be honored by the American people.

Not far behind this man in the great fight we must place his cousin, John Adams, who was acknowledged to be the most powerful debater on the floor of Congress. We shall see more of him later. There are many other

great names of that period with which every schoolboy is familiar.

The idea of independence gained rapidly all through the winter, and before many months of the year 1776 had passed, a large majority of the people favored it. But there had been nothing done officially. The colonies were still, in the eyes of the world, subject to England. It was April before any colony made an official move for independence.

To North Carolina must be awarded the honor of being first to act as a colony on this great subject.[1] On April the 12th its provincial congress instructed its delegates in the general Congress at Philadelphia, "To concur with the delegates of the other colonies in declaring independency and forming foreign alliances." This movement was led by Cornelius Harnet, who was called the Samuel Adams of North Carolina. This was a beginning and a very important one. Before this the talk of separation from England had all been private talk; now there was official action by one of the famous Thirteen

[1] Frothingham, p. 504.

The meaning was far-reaching, and none could mistake that meaning. Not long did North Carolina stand alone. Rhode Island soon followed, and Massachusetts came third. In Massachusetts the voice of the people was heard through town meetings held all over the colony. There was but one voice, "Freedom, freedom from the tyranny of British rule."

The next to act was the Old Dominion, Virginia. The convention met at Williamsburg on the 6th of May. That convention listened to the eloquent Patrick Henry, whose burning words of the year before were still ringing through the land: "Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others will take; but as for me, give me liberty, or give me death."

In that convention sat George Mason at the height of his great powers, and James Madison, not yet twenty-five years old, but one of the keenest and profoundest of lawyers. The Virginia convention went farther than any that acted before it. It instructed its

delegates in Congress to actually propose independence before that body. This bold resolution was immediately sent by a special messenger, Colonel Nelson, to the Congress at Philadelphia.

Thus we see that the South and New England took the lead, while all the middle colonies still hesitated. Let us now see what Congress is doing.

A View of Congress

This Second Continental Congress was so important, and did such great things for America, that it is fitting that we notice briefly a few of its leading characters.

Many of the members were men of wealth, and belonged to the greatest families in their respective colonies. Many attained eminence and fame in later years; but the majority are unknown to fame except through this one act — signing the Declaration of Independence. The names of a few are familiar in every home in the land; such are those of Thomas Jefferson, the writer of the immortal document; John Adams, the second President; and Benjamin Franklin, whose

fame long before the Revolution extended to the utmost bounds of civilization.

The three greatest of the colonies were Virginia, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania, and we find from these three the strongest delegations in Congress. Virginia's greatest son was in the field at the head of the army; but we find from that colony still remaining, in addition to Jefferson, Richard Henry Lee, who had been educated in England, one of the most brilliant statesmen of the time, and Benjamin Harrison, confidential friend of Washington, the father of one President and great-grandfather of another.

From Massachusetts we have the two Adamses, John Hancock, one of the richest merchants of New England, a statesman of high qualities, and now President of Congress; and Elbridge Gerry, afterward a member of the famous triple mission to France in 1797, governor of Massachusetts and Vice-President of the United States.

The Pennsylvania delegation was second to none. First, always first, the great Franklin; next, John Dickinson, of the same age

as Washington, educated in London, a renowned writer against the tyranny of England; truly desirous of independence, but, thinking the time too soon, he opposed the measure with great moral courage. Scarcely below him stands James Wilson. His name, like that of Dickinson, is not at this day well known to the masses of the people. He was afterward a justice of the Supreme Court and professor in the University of Pennsylvania; he was perhaps the most learned lawyer in America Let us not forget Robert Morris, the wealthy Philadelphia merchant, who came forward in the dark days of the Revolution and supported the armies for a time from his own purse, but who afterward lost his fortune, and, in his old age, to the lasting disgrace of the United States, languished for several years in a debtor's prison!

There were men of note in this Congress from other colonies. There was Roger Sherman, the shoemaker statesman from Connecticut, who "never said a foolish thing in his life," who spent all the rest of his life, nineteen years, as a member of Congress; there was Cæsar Rod

ney and Thomas McKean of Delaware, and Francis Hopkinson of New Jersey; William Ellery of Rhode Island and Samuel Chase of Maryland.

Truly it was an illustrious body of men. Here were future presidents, governors, ministers abroad, cabinet officers, and United States senators. Nearly all of them lived to be old, and to see the new Government take its place among the nations; and not one of them ever did or said anything to bring dishonor upon the new-born republic. The one who survived all his fellows was Charles Carroll of Carrollton, Maryland, who died in 1832 at the great age of ninety-five years.

The Final Act in the Great Drama

The whole country was astir during the spring of 1776. Perils were threatening on every hand. The Howes were moving on New York; Carleton was threatening an invasion from the north; a British fleet was harassing the southern coast, while the merciless Indian was plying the tomahawk on the frontier. But the patriots, instead of being awed

into submission, clamored the louder for independence. This showed, not only a noble patriotism, but a courage that all the world must admire. A great English writer has said, "America was never so great as on the day when she declared her independence."

Congress passed in May a resolution permitting the colonies to form governments of their own in defiance of British authority. This was true revolution, that is, a changing of their form of government. 'Is not America already independent? why not then declare it?" said the ever vigilant Samuel Adams.

Early in June the messenger from the Virginia convention reached Philadelphia. What his message was we have seen. On the 7th, Richard Henry Lee offered a resolution which was seconded by John Adams. Here are the words: —

"That these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be free and independent States, that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain is, and ought to be totally dissolved."

This was the true Declaration of Independence; it covered the whole subject. But the resolution was not now voted on. After three days debate it was laid on the table till the 1st of July. Congress thought best not to be hasty in dealing with so great a subject. In order to be ready to act when the right time came, a committee was chosen to draw up a suitable declaration. This committee was chosen by ballot; and Thomas Jefferson, receiving the highest number of votes, was made chairman, and thus became the writer of the immortal paper. The other members of the committee were Franklin, John Adams, Roger Sherman, and Robert Livingston. Some of the colonies had not yet instructed their delegates to act, and the delegates would not vote on their own authority. By the end of June, all the colonies except one, New York, had granted this authority.

On the morning of July the 1st, the members sat in their places; Lee's motion was taken off the table and was before the House; but no one said a word. The New Jersey delegates, who had just arrived requested that

the debate of three weeks before be repeated, that they might fully understand the subject. At first no one moved, but the eyes of all turned to John Adams. He saw that he was expected to speak; he had made no preparation, but his soul was burning with the subject. He now arose and made a speech which was no doubt the most powerful one delivered in Congress during the Revolutionary period. Not a word of this great effort has been preserved; but Daniel Webster has given us the spirit of it in his "Supposed Speech of John Adams."

Several members opposed the declaration, the leader of whom was Dickinson. He answered Adams as best he could; but he was on the wrong side, and years afterward he acknowledged it. The vote was taken on the evening of the next day. It was desirous that no colony vote against the measure. Each colony had one vote, the majority of the delegates casting it, while the minority counted for nothing. Delaware had three delegates, but one of them, Cæsar Rodney, was absent in Delaware, and of the two present one was on

each side. A messenger was sent with all speed for Rodney. On hearing the news he leaped on his black horse and started at full gallop for Philadelphia, eighty miles away. All day and all night he sped through forests and over streams.[1] This was a greater ride than the more famous one of Paul Revere; the more remarkable it seems, when we remember that Rodney was suffering from a cancer in the face, which afterward cost him his life. He reached the capital city just in time to cast his vote and save Delaware for freedom.

The majority of the Pennsylvania delegates opposed independence; but, seeing that the tide was against them, and not wishing their colony to be the only one to vote against the measure, two of them remained away, and the rest cast the vote in the affirmative.

The resolution for independence passed on the 2d of July by the unanimous vote of twelve colonies, New York not voting. The 2d of July is therefore the real natal day of the United States — we must call them *colonies* no longer.

[1] Walton and Brumbaugh's "Stories of Pennsylvania," p. 180.

But it was necessary to put this great act into a fitting form of words, giving reasons for taking the step, before sending it forth to the world. Jefferson had them prepared. His document was now taken up, debated for two days, changed a little here and there, and adopted on the evening of the 4th. The same twelve States voted as on the 2d. New York added her vote a few days later, and the whole thirteen were now agreed on the great measure. The form adopted on the 4th was the "Declaration of Independence" with which we are all familiar; hence the Fourth of July has become our National Holiday. When the Declaration was first sent out it was signed only by the President of Congress, John Hancock, and by the Secretary, Charles Thompson. It was also ordered to be engrossed on parchment; this was finished in several weeks, when all the fifty-six members signed it, most of them on the 2d of August. This parchment copy is now in Washington, kept by the secretary of state.

The rest of the story is well known. The old Liberty Bell rang out the glad tidings of

freedom. Night was turned into day with bonfires and illuminations. The Declaration was read in cities, towns, and villages, from the pulpit in the churches, from the public platform, everywhere, amid shouts of joy and gladness from the people. It was read at the head of each brigade of the army, and the roll of the drum and the roar of cannon furnished the glad answer of the patriot-soldiers. Thus the exultant multitudes welcomed the new day that was dawning. Thus was the United States of America launched upon the ocean of National Life.

CHAPTER II

Framing of the Constitution

If there is one thing in our early history that approaches in importance the passing of the Declaration of Independence, it is the making of our Constitution, which was done eleven years later in the same building of the same city. In one sense the latter is of more interest to us all; the Declaration is now a historic document only, highly revered by all Americans, it is true, but of no present legal force; while the Constitution is still the supreme law of the land. The Declaration was called for by the people from all parts. Congress simply ratified their wishes in passing it. The Constitution cost a severe and prolonged struggle in the convention that framed it, and a more severe and more prolonged struggle in the various States before being adopted.

Condition of the Country after the Revolution

Before proceeding to an account of the making of the Constitution, let us notice briefly the great need of such an instrument — the condition of the country before its adoption. The people had won their freedom in a long and bloody war with a great nation, but at the close of the war the country was in a sad plight — no money to pay the soldiers nor the foreign debt, and no means of raising money.

The Congress had assumed the burden of the war and had adopted measures for carrying it on, not from any legal authority, but by common consent. That the colonies stick together during the war was absolutely necessary to success; but scarcely was the war over when the States began to feel their importance and to disregard the laws of Congress. That body could not enforce its own laws, it could only recommend; and any refractory State among the thirteen could openly and successfully defy its power. Now it is evident that no government can long

exist if it has not power to enforce its own measures, and exactly in that condition do we find the United States for some years after the Revolution.

The great duty devolved upon the statesmen of that day to organize and consolidate these States into one firm and compact nation, and at the same time to retain the separate State governments in such a way that State laws and National laws would not conflict, but work in one grand harmony. This would secure both liberty and union. These two, Liberty and Union, are opposite tendencies of government, and they can exist together only when each yields part of its prestige to the other. Could these two, Liberty and Union, be so balanced in the same government as to secure the benefits of both?

It was a great problem. It was a problem that the ancient world labored for ages to solve, but labored in vain. Greece walked forth in the pride of her freedom, forgetting the need of Union, until she perished. Rome made the opposite mistake. Rome fostered and exalted Union for its strength until it

became a tyrant and strangled the child Liberty. It was left for America to solve the problem whether Liberty and Union could be joined in perpetual wedlock, and the world turned with wondering eyes to the new-born Republic of the West and awaited the decision whether a "government of the people, by the people, and for the people," could endure upon the earth.

Before the war the thirteen colonies had been joined separately to England. When that bond was broken they found themselves thirteen separate republics, and not one of them strong enough to maintain its freedom alone. Yet there was much prejudice against uniting, as each was jealous of its own liberties, and the people feared that a general government, when formed, would become a tyrant, as England had been.

Union had been a child of the Revolution, called forth in an emergency, and for a special purpose, but was now no longer needful, especially since it was likely to encroach upon that other child still dearer to the American heart — Liberty. It was this feeling among

the people that made it so difficult for the statesmen of that day to organize the government that we now enjoy. There had been adopted, it is true, a constitution known as the "Articles of Confederation"; but this was a rope of sand, and its best service was to teach the people their need of something better.

Defects in the Articles of Confederation

At different times during the colonial period there had been efforts at union. The first of these, dating 1643, comprised four New England colonies, and was in force something over forty years. Another plan of union, drawn up by Dr. Franklin at the Albany Convention of 1754, was rejected by the colonies as too monarchical, and by the King as too democratic. There were efforts of less importance at various times, but we pass these by, and give our attention to the period before us.

In July, 1776, a few days after the Declaration of Independence was passed, a plan of government was proposed in Congress. It was

debated for a short time and then laid on the table, where it rested for over a year, when it was again taken up and adopted. This instrument was called the Articles of Confederation. It contained some of the elements of our present Constitution; but it provided for no president, no supreme court, and only one house of congress. This Congress had no power over commerce, no power to raise taxes except by the unanimous consent of the States, and it dealt with the States as units and not with the people as individuals. We can readily see how weak such a government must be. Let us notice more fully a few of these defects.

First: The operation of National law on a State and not on the citizen. The citizen had no direct relation to the government; all his political relations were to his State. If, for example, a man now violates a postal or revenue law, he is punished directly under United States laws, and the State in which the offence is committed has nothing to do with the matter. But under the Articles of Confederation, Congress had no such power: it

could only call upon the State in which the offence was committed to punish the offender, and if the State neglected or refused to do so, there was no power to force it.

Second: There was no executive and no judiciary — no president to enforce the laws and no supreme court to interpret them. This was a serious defect indeed.

Third: They voted in Congress by States and not by individual members, each State having one vote, regardless of its size and importance. It required the votes of nine States to carry any important measure; and sometimes for months there were less than nine represented.

Fourth: Congress had no power to enforce any law whatever. The States, knowing this, had little regard for the laws of Congress. The Articles forbade any State to wage war or make a treaty; yet Georgia did both with the Creek Indians. The States were forbidden to keep troops in time of peace; yet several of them did so. They were forbidden to enter into compacts; yet Virginia and Maryland did so concerning the navigation

of the Potomac River; so also did Pennsylvania and New Jersey in setting the bounds to Delaware.[1] The Articles were constantly violated by the different States, but there was no power to prevent such violations.

Fifth: Congress had no power over commerce. This was a most glaring defect. Our agents were sent abroad to make treaties of commerce, and any treaty thus made could be set aside and annulled by any single State in the Union. The result was that foreign nations refused to treat with us and our foreign commerce was in a most deplorable condition.

There was no power to raise taxes, directly or indirectly, without the consent of every State. In 1782 Congress called upon the States to consent to a five per cent impost tariff, so as to raise money to pay the soldiers and the foreign creditors. Twelve of the States acceded to this, but one refused, little Rhode Island, and the project had to fall to the ground. The next year a five per

[1] MacMaster's "History of the People of the United States," Vol. I. p. 340.

cent tariff, limited to twenty-five years, was proposed. Twelve again agreed to this, including Rhode Island, but this time New York refused, and not a dollar could be raised.

The paper money known as continental money became so depreciated that it took one hundred and seventy-five dollars to purchase a bushel of corn. When any one wished to express his utmost contempt for the value of anything, he would say, "Not worth a continental," an expression we still hear sometimes. Congress was penniless and powerless; and thoughtful people saw that something had to be done, and that soon.

Quarrels of the States

Besides the impotency of Congress, there was continual jealousy among the States. The small States feared that the large ones would reduce them to the condition of subjects; and, in fact, Pennsylvania and New Jersey came near doing that very thing with Delaware. There were constant quarrels among the States. They remind us of a lot

of school children, each afraid the others would gain some advantage. New York and New Hampshire both claimed the territory of Vermont and were about to fight over it. New York sent troops into Vermont and New Hampshire was about to do the same. Vermont was plucky and bristled up like a fighting terrier, and was about to fight them both, when Washington appeared on the scene as peacemaker. Vermont stuck to her claims, and, in 1791, after seeking admission into the Union for fifteen years, became the fourteenth State.

Another State quarrel was between New York, on the one side, and New Jersey and Connecticut on the other. New Jersey sold a great deal of poultry and dairy products to New York, and Connecticut sold firewood to the same State. Now New York laid a tariff on New Jersey poultry and Connecticut firewood. Then New Jersey retaliated by taxing New York's lighthouse on Sandy Hook, while Connecticut got even by boycotting New York.

But the most serious of the State quarrels

was that between Pennsylvania and Connecticut over the Wyoming Valley. This quarrel came to blows and bloodshed. Connecticut claimed the Wyoming Valley by right of her charter and many of her people had settled there before the Revolution. Pennsylvania also claimed it and sent troops there to drive out the Connecticut people. After much strife and cruelty it was decided to arbitrate. Pennsylvania won, and Connecticut moved farther westward and took possession of a slice of northern Ohio, then a Territory, one hundred and twenty miles long and the width of the State of Connecticut. This was called the Western Reserve.

By these things we see that the Government was in an imbecile condition; something had to be done, or anarchy would prevail. Washington wrote a circular letter to the governors of all the States, urging a stronger government than the one existing. The people saw that there must be radical changes in the Government ere long, but what shape it would take no one knew. Some talked of a kingdom with the second son of George the

Third as King. This was freely talked of in England, but found no footing in America. The people had had enough of George the Third. Washington was approached on the subject of becoming King, but this project gained little favor with the people; and, besides, Washington positively refused to consider the matter. Then three confederate republics were talked of: one comprising New England; another, the Middle States; and a third, the Southern States. No one seemed to surmise that the boundless West was destined to become part of our public domain.

The Annapolis Convention

While the country was in this restless and unsettled condition, Virginia, the grand Old Dominion, came to the rescue and called a national convention to meet at Annapolis, Maryland, in September, 1786. Only a few States responded — none from New England, nor from the extreme South. There were only twelve delegates present, but these did something. They called another convention to meet at Philadelphia the following May

This proposed meeting at Philadelphia was destined to be the far-famed Constitutional Convention.

Would the States respond to the call? was the question of the hour. The people generally looked to Virginia to take the lead, nor did they look in vain. Virginia was considered the greatest State in the Union, and she had called the convention at Annapolis. The election of delegates in this State was directed by a young man, James Madison, and he made a happy hit at the outstart by securing the selection of George Washington. There was a reverence for Washington in every State that was little short of idolatry, and his name was a power in giving the convention tone over the whole country. There were but two men in America whose fame was world-wide, and Washington was one of them. Virginia next chose her governor, Edmond Randolph; but she did nothing better than when she chose Madison himself as one of the delegates. Patrick Henry would have been sent, but he refused to go. He was opposed to holding the convention; so also

ering. Most of the members had filled high positions before, and many filled still higher positions afterward. Seven had been governors of States, and twenty-eight, members of Congress. Two afterward became Presidents of the United States, one, Vice-President, and many others, cabinet officers and ministers abroad. Eight had signed the Declaration of Independence eleven years before, and a few had been members of the Stamp Act Congress of 1765.

The greatest American genius of that day was the oldest man in the convention, Benjamin Franklin, aged eighty-one. Of him and of George Washington nothing need be said, as every schoolboy knows their history. There were in this convention Robert Morris, James Wilson, John Dickinson, Elbridge Gerry, and Roger Sherman — these have been referred to in the preceding chapter. There was Edmond Randolph, the popular young governor of Virginia, who, as a youth, at the outbreak of the Revolution, could not agree with his Tory father, ran away from home, joined the patriot army, and served through the war. He after

ward became governor of his State and member of Washington's cabinet. We also find Gouverneur Morris, the author of our decimal system of money; John Rutledge, the brilliant orator of South Carolina; Rufus King, who was yet to spend many years in the forefront of political life; and Charles C. Pinckney, afterward a member of the famous mission to France, and twice candidate of his party for the presidency of the United States.

The two profoundest statesmen in the convention were young men, Madison and Hamilton. To Madison, perhaps, we owe more for making the Constitution what it is than to any other man. Alexander Hamilton, afterward a member of Washington's cabinet, and the leader of his party as long as he lived, was a great lawyer and the greatest financier this country has yet seen. He was born in the West Indies, came to New York when a boy, left college to join the army, showed military genius of a high order, entered public life at the close of the war, and fell at last a victim of the duelist's bullet[1] in the midst of his brilliant career.

[1] See Chapter VII.

The convention chose Washington as its president, closed its doors, and began its sittings for the summer. It was well that the sessions were kept secret from the public, for had the newspapers printed the wrangles and disputes that took place in that convention, the people would have been distracted. There were now all kinds of speculation as to what the convention would do. It had been elected for the purpose of amending the Articles of Confederation, but there was a general belief that it would go beyond its instructions. James Wilson related an anecdote of the poet Pope. A common expression of the poet, who was a man of frail body, was "God mend me!" A boy was one day assisting him across a ravine when the poet made use of his familiar phrase. "Mend *you*," said the lad; "it would be easier to make half a dozen new ones." So it would be easier to make half a dozen new constitutions than to mend the old one.[1]

The United States Government was compared to an old man who had thirteen sons. They had built a big house and all lived

[1] Bryce's "American Commonwealth," Vol. I. p. 310.

together for several years, when the sons grew weary of the paternal roof and each went out and built a hut for himself. Then trouble began: one had his corn stolen; another lost his sheep by wolves; another, his crops by flood, and so forth. At length twelve of them begged their father to take them back, and he gladly did so. But the thirteenth still held aloof, and at last went and hanged himself. That thirteenth was Rhode Island. Hard things were now said about Rhode Island. The five per cent impost had been defeated by Rhode Island, and as the little State now refused to take part in the convention, everything bad was blamed on it — the bankrupt treasury, the suffering of the soldiers, the poverty of the whole nation.[1] "Drop the State out of the Union," it was said; "force it to pay its share of the Revolutionary debt, then drop it from the roll of States; or, better still, divide it between Massachusetts and Connecticut."

[1] MacMaster, Vol. I. p. 393.

The Three Great Compromises

The Constitutional Convention sat with closed doors for four months. The work it produced was a great work: it brought order out of chaos; it converted a Confederation of States into a Federal Government. Mr. Gladstone has said that "The American Constitution is the greatest work ever struck off at any one time by the mind and purpose of man." From another great Englishman we quote: "The Constitution of the United States of America is much the most important political instrument of modern times."

It is needless to give here a full account of the working of this convention. The great document which it produced is based on three compromises, and to these we give brief notice.

First Compromise. — Between the large and small States. When the convention had decided that the new Government should consist of three coördinate branches, an Executive, a Judicial, and a Legislative, and that the national legislature should consist of two

houses, a dispute arose between the large and small States. The large States claimed that each State should be represented in Congress according to population; while the small States demanded that all be equally represented, regardless of size and importance, as under the Articles of Confederation. Long and fierce were the debates on this subject, each side avowing that it would not yield. Two or three times the convention was on the verge of breaking up, when at length they struck a compromise, called the Connecticut Compromise because introduced by the delegates from that State.[1] By this agreement it was decided that in the Lower House of Congress the representation should be according to population, while in the Upper House, or Senate, the States should be equally represented. This is the most permanent clause in the Constitution, for it provides that no State shall be deprived of its equal representation in the Senate *without its own consent.* Thus Delaware has the same voice in the Senate as New York, while in the House of Repre

[1] George Bancroft's "History of the U. S.," Vol. VI. p. 239.

sentatives the vote of New York is at the present time (1899) thirty-four times as great as that of Delaware.

Second Compromise. — Between the free and slave States. Before it was fully decided whether to base the House of Representatives on population or wealth, another question arose: Are slaves population or wealth? The South claimed that the slaves were a part of the population, and should all be counted in the census that makes up the representation in Congress. The North contended that as slaves were bought and sold, they were merely property; and since they had no vote, they should not be counted in making up the census. Besides, it would give too much power to the men who owned large numbers of slaves.

Again there was fierce contention in the convention. Neither side would yield. Another compromise was the result - three-fifths of the slaves were to be counted in the census; so it was decided, and so it continued to the time of the Civil War.

Third Compromise. — Between agricultural

and commercial States. When the census question was settled, the subject of further importation of negroes from Africa engaged the attention. A large majority in the convention opposed the foreign slave-trade. "The traffic must be stopped," said they; "it is an inhuman business, this seizure of human beings and condemning them to lifelong bondage because they are black; it is contrary to morality, religion, and the Declaration of Independence, the very principles on which the Revolution was fought." Then two States protested in thunder-tones — South Carolina and Georgia. The African slave-trade was necessary to their prosperity, they said. They raised rice and indigo in their boundless swamps where no white man could work, and even the black man could stand it but a few years, and the ranks had to be constantly refilled from Africa. They would not join the Union if the African slave-trade was prohibited. They contended that it was not a matter of morality nor of religion; it was a matter of business; it was whether or not South Carolina and Georgia were wanted in the Union.

This was now very serious. The delegates from the other States felt morally bound to stop this traffic in human flesh and blood, but the attitude of these two States put a chill on their ardor. The outlook was grave: Rhode Island was not represented; the New York delegates had gone home in anger because they couldn't have their own way; Massachusetts was by no means certain. If now South Carolina and Georgia refused to take further part, it was plain that no Union could be formed.

Before this question was settled another arose, namely, shall Congress or the States severally have control over commerce? The South said, that by all means the States should manage their own commerce. It was an agricultural region; it desired a low tariff, or none at all, so as to buy goods cheaply from abroad. New England now protested. Its wealth was in shipping. The tariff should be the same in all the States. Congress should control it. Again there was a deadlock. Two great questions now lay before the convention: the control of commerce and the foreign slave-trade. Again a compromise was reached. It was

decided that Congress should control commerce, and that the African slave-trade be left open — not forever, but for twenty-one years — until the year 1808. This was the third compromise of the Constitution.

The most important work of making the Constitution was now completed, and the summer was well-nigh spent. But there was much yet to do of minor importance; as, how to elect the President, for how long a term, and what powers should be given him? Many wanted the President elected by Congress, and seven years was the favorite length of term; but a term of four years was agreed upon and the election by an electoral college. Then the Supreme Court — how should the judges be appointed? what should be their powers? what powers should Congress have? and the like. All these things and many others were ably discussed, and finally decided as we have them now in our Constitution.

This great document being finished, the convention ended its sittings on the 17th of September. Few of the members were satisfied with it; each one thought it would have

been a little better had he written it himself. Franklin advised that all the members sign it, that each one yield his own judgment to that of the majority. "Too many," he said, "are like the French lady, who, in an argument with her sister, exclaimed, 'I do not know why it is, sister, but I find nobody that is always in the right, except myself,'" or, we may add, like the old Quaker who said to his wife, "Rebecca, all the world is queer but thee and me, and sometimes I think thee is a little queer."

As the members were signing, Franklin, pointing to a picture on the back of the chair in which Washington sat, remarked, "In looking at that picture, I have often wondered, during the summer, whether it was a rising or a setting sun, now I *know* it is a rising sun."

The Constitution before the People

The ship *Constitution* had had a rough voyage thus far, but the storms were by no means over. It was decided that if nine States adopted it, the new Constitution would

take effect and become the supreme law of the land; but here it was destined to encounter serious and almost fatal opposition. It was sent to Congress, still sitting in New York, but there was much opposition to it in that body, led by Richard Henry Lee. After debating the subject for eight days, however, Congress sent it to the States without recommendation for or against it.

Now for the first time the people arrayed themselves into two great political parties. Those desiring a strong government and favoring the Constitution, became known as the Federalists; those opposing it were called Anti-Federalists. The people were nearly equally divided, and the strife extended over nearly a year, and was very bitter.

Delaware won the honor of being the first State to adopt the new Constitution. This was in December. Pennsylvania followed in the same month, led by James Wilson. In that State almost half the people opposed the Constitution, and it was adopted only after a most severe struggle. New Jersey came next and Georgia fourth. Georgia was

bounded on the west by hostile Indians and on the south by troublesome Spaniards. A better government was therefore quite welcome to the people, who felt the need of a stronger defence.

The two greatest States, Virginia and Massachusetts, still held aloof. There was powerful opposition in both. The convention was in session in Massachusetts and the feeling was that it would decide the fate of New England and perhaps of the Union. The eyes of all now turned toward Massachusetts. In addition to Elbridge Gerry, who had helped frame the Constitution and then refused to sign it, two of the foremost men in the State opposed it — Samuel Adams and John Hancock. But Adams was converted in a novel way. During the convention a mass-meeting of laboring men, who favored the new Constitution, met at the Green Dragon hotel, in Boston. They were great admirers of Samuel Adams and sent one of their number, Paul Revere, famous for his midnight ride of years before, to inform Mr. Adams that they desired him to favor the Constitution. "How

many of you are there?" asked Adams Revere, pointing upward, answered, "More than the stars in the sky." Mr. Adams was much moved; he was converted, and Massachusetts soon afterward ratified the Constitution. This was the sixth State. Connecticut had been the fifth. Maryland and South Carolina soon raised the number to eight, and but one more was now needed to put the new Government into operation.

It was now June, 1788. The Virginian convention was in session. The State had waited nearly a year, and eight of her sisters had ratified. There was a great opposition in Virginia, led by Richard Henry Lee and Patrick Henry. But in spite of Henry's eloquence the State ratified on the 25th of June. The shout of triumph was thrilling, and it spread over the whole country.

"The ninth State, the ninth State," cried the people; "Virginia has ratified, there are now nine States, and the Government is secure. Hurrah for the United States of America!" But Virginia was not the ninth State. New Hampshire had ratified four days

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before, though the news had not yet reached Virginia. New York joined the ranks in July. This made eleven. The other two States, North Carolina and Rhode Island, remained out of the Union until some time after the first President had been inaugurated.

Nearly all the States, on adopting the Constitution, proposed amendments aggregating more than a hundred. These were considered by Congress. The House boiled them down to seventeen, and the Senate reduced this number to twelve, when they were sent to the State legislatures, as the Constitution provides. The States ratified ten of them. The first ten amendments to our Constitution were therefore adopted before the close of the year 1791. The eleventh followed some years later, while John Adams was President, and the twelfth in 1804. This was the last amendment for sixty-one years, the next being that abolishing slavery at the close of the Civil War.

The adoption of our Constitution marks a great era in human history — it marks the birth of a Nation destined to be the greatest

of the earth. It created a Federal Government, a wonderful combination between the States and the Nation — each supreme within its own sphere, neither encroaching upon the domain of the other. This marvellous machinery was set in motion by the adoption of our Federal Constitution.

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CHAPTER III

The Inauguration of Washington

The Unanimous Election

In our own times it is not possible to foretell who will be the next President of the United States until the people have made their choice by the ballot. But in 1788, when the Constitution had been adopted by the requisite number of States and was soon to go into operation, there was no speculation as to who would be the first President. Every one knew that the great chieftain who had led the Revolutionary armies to victory was the choice of the Nation.

General Washington, having passed the meridian of life, had retired after the war to his home at Mount Vernon, hoping to spend the evening of his days undisturbed on his farm. Most men in public life are ambitious to rise higher and higher; but it was not so with Washington. His great desire was to spend

the rest of his life amid the rural attractions of his home on the banks of the Potomac. No one can doubt this who reads his diary and his private correspondence. But when the great man heard the call, not only of his personal and political friends, but of the whole people as with one voice, to become the Chief Magistrate, he felt it his solemn duty to heed and obey the call.

Congress had decided that the electors be chosen in each State on the first Wednesday in January, 1789; that they meet and choose a President and Vice-President on the first Wednesday in February, and that the new Government go into effect on the first Wednesday in March. This day happened that year to be the 4th. A few years later the Fourth of March was made the legal inauguration day by act of Congress, and it has so continued ever since. New York City had been chosen as the temporary capital of the new Government.

The 4th of March came, but the new Congress did not meet on that day; there was no quorum present. The President was not

inaugurated; he had not yet arrived. In fact it was only by Congress that he could be officially informed of his election. The new Government had been ushered in on the 4th of March by the booming of cannon and the ringing of bells; but, owing to the bad roads, long distances, and the slow methods of travel, Congress had not a quorum until the first of April, when the Lower House began its first session, the Senate not meeting till the sixth.

One of the first things Congress did was to count the electoral votes, when it was found that George Washington had received sixty-nine, the entire number, and John Adams thirty-four, each elector having voted for two men. The votes not cast for Adams were scattered among ten other men, John Jay standing next to him with nine votes. But ten States voted in this election. North Carolina and Rhode Island were not yet members of the Union, and New York had not voted, owing to a quarrel between the two houses of the legislature.

A messenger, Charles Thompson, long the

secretary of the old Congress, was immediately despatched with the news of the election to Mount Vernon. He arrived there about the middle of April, and Washington immediately set out on his journey to New York. On the 16th he wrote in his diary: "About ten o'clock I bade adieu to Mount Vernon, to private life, and to domestic felicity; and, with a mind oppressed with more anxious and painful sensations than I have words to express, set out for New York with the best disposition to render service to my country in obedience to its call, but with less hope of answering its expectations."

The Triumphal March

Washington's journey to New York was one continuous ovation. It was like the triumphal march of a Roman conqueror. Men, women, and children of all ages thronged the highways to shout their glad welcomes, and show their love to this first citizen of the land. He preferred a quiet, unostentatious journey, but public feeling was too strong to be suppressed. In every city through which he

passed there was great preparation for his reception, and large numbers of citizens and soldiers escorted him through their respective States. At Alexandria he was given a public dinner presided over by the mayor, whose happy address was answered by Washington in a few choice words showing the deepest emotion. He was received with high honors at Baltimore and Chester; but it was left for Philadelphia and Trenton to make the greatest display in doing homage to this civilian hero.

The people of Philadelphia had erected a triumphal arch at Grey's Ferry on the Schuylkill, near the entrance of the city. At Chester, fourteen miles below, Washington had been placed on a superb white horse. The procession started for the city and was augmented along the way until it became a multitude. He entered the city amid the shouts of the gathered thousands and the roaring of artillery. As he passed under the arch, a crown of laurel was let down upon his head by a boy who had been concealed for the purpose amid the laurel branches. The day

was given to festivities, and at night there was a grand display of fireworks.

On the next day, April the 21st, a beautiful sunny day, Washington reached Trenton, and his reception here was the most touching of them all. What memories must have rushed to his mind when he reached the banks of the Delaware, where, twelve years before, he had crossed on that dark winter night amid ice and snow to strike a telling blow at the enemy. The change since then had been marvellous. Then the darkness of the winter night only typified the darkness that seemed to be settling like a pall over the patriot cause; now the brightness of the day was typical of the exultant gladness of a free and united people.

The people of Trenton were prepared to receive the approaching chieftain. At the bridge across the little river that flows through the city was erected a triumphal arch, tastefully decorated with evergreen and flowers. In front of the arch in large gilt letters were the words: "The defender of the mothers will be the protector of the daughters." At

this point a large number of women met Washington and his escort, and as he passed under the arch a number of schoolgirls, dressed in white and crowned with garlands, came forward singing an ode[1] and strewing his path with flowers. Washington was more deeply affected by this than at any other time during his journey. He said that the impression it made upon his heart could never be effaced.[2]

The procession was two days crossing New Jersey to Elizabethtown Point, where they were met by a reception committee from both houses of Congress. Here a fine barge, built for the occasion, was waiting to take the President-elect to the New York harbor. It was manned by thirteen pilots in white uniform, and was ac-

[1] The ode was composed for the occasion and is as follows: —

"Welcome, mighty Chief, once more,
Welcome to this grateful shore;
Now no mercenary foe
Aims again the fatal blow.

"Virgins fair and matrons grave,
Those thy conquering arm did save,
Build for thee triumphal bowers;
Strew the hero's way with flowers."

[2] Marshall's "Life of Washington," Vol. V. p. 159.

companied by many other vessels highly decorated and bearing many distinguished citizens. These formed a nautical procession and swept up the beautiful bay, cheered on by instrumental music and by the firing of salutes from the ships lying at anchor along the harbor.[1]

New York's Welcome

It was Thursday, April the 23d, 1789 New York City had donned its holiday dress. Flags were floating over the principal buildings, bells were ringing, and the people were in a flutter of excitement. Soldiers in bright uniform stood along the side walks, mounted aids galloped to and fro amid the surging crowd, while bands of music enlivened the scene. The bay was full of vessels with flaunting flags and streaming pennants. The crowd along the Battery was dense, and, as the people stood gazing down the bay, the barge in which Washington had embarked hove in sight, when the boom of cannon from the anchored vessels announced the fact, and was answered by thirteen guns from the city. The

[1] Irving's "Life of Washington," Vol. IV. p 565.

barge approached and from it stepped Washington, — tall and stalwart, with a proud, soldier-like step, but with a serious, thoughtful countenance. Here he was met by Governor George Clinton, and escorted through the streets amid prolonged cheering on all sides.[1]

The inauguration was to take place at Federal Hall (now the New York custom-house) corner Broad and Wall streets. Vice-President Adams had been sworn into office before Washington reached the city; but a week was yet to elapse before the latter was to be inducted into his position, owing to the repairing of the building still in progress.

At length the day came — April 30, 1789. At nine o'clock religious services were held in all the churches in the city. Before noon the streets about Federal Hall were packed with a solid mass of people, the windows of the surrounding buildings were filled with eager faces, and the roofs were covered with anxious sightseers.

A few minutes after twelve o'clock, Wash-

[1] A good brief account of Washington's reception in New York is given by Schouler (Vol I. p. 150).

ington, accompanied by John Adams and Chancellor Livingston, and followed by both Houses of Congress, stepped forth on the balcony in the presence of the vast assemblage of people. The shout of welcome that rose seemed to pour forth the whole heart of the Nation. Washington placed his hand upon his heart and bowed again and again to the cheering multitude. He then sank back into an arm-chair, and the crowd, seeming to understand that he was overcome with emotion, was instantly hushed into silence. He soon rose again and stepped forward between Adams and Livingston, while in the rear stood Alexander Hamilton, Roger Sherman, Baron Steuben, and two Revolutionary generals, Knox and St. Clair.

The secretary of the Senate stood by with an open Bible, on which Washington laid his hand while Chancellor Livingston pronounced the oath of office. At its conclusion Washington replied in solemn, stifled words: "I swear — so help me God." He then reverently bowed, and kissed the Bible.

Livingston now stepped forward, waved his hand to the people, and shouted: —

"Long live George Washington, President of the United States."

The next moment a flag was displayed on the cupola of the hall, and this was the signal for the discharge of artillery on the Battery. Bells were rung all over the city, and the shout that rose from the assembled crowd spread from street to street until the whole city was a roaring, seething mass of humanity.

Soon afterward, the newly installed President retired within the hall and read his inaugural address. His voice was low and tremulous, as one of his hearers wrote, and his countenance grave almost to sadness, showing his deep sense of responsibility.

Thus was ushered into office the first President of the United States, amid the heartiest welcome that a grateful people could bestow. More than a century has passed since then, and the great Washington is still the American idol. No other President, no other statesman, has won the universal homage of the people as he did. Washington has no rival — he can have no rival — in holding the first place in the great American heart.

CHAPTER IV

The Alien and Sedition Laws

The most famous legislation in our history after the adoption of the Constitution and before the Missouri Compromise was, perhaps, the Alien and Sedition Laws. The effect of these laws, though in force but a short time, was far-reaching and important, as they had much to do in the overthrow of the political party that brought them into existence, and in establishing in power a party of opposite tendencies.

Political Parties One Hundred Years Ago

Party lines in 1798 were more tensely drawn than they now are. Far less do our great political parties of to-day differ from each other than did the Federal and Republican parties of one hundred years ago. The Federal party, led by Alexander Hamilton, stood for a strong

centralized government. The Republican party, afterward called the Democratic party, founded and led by Thomas Jefferson, stood for States' Rights and local self-government.

These two party leaders, Jefferson and Hamilton, were, beyond a doubt, the greatest American statesmen of this period. Both were as patriotic as it is possible to be, but they differed widely in their ideas of what the Government of the United States should be. They opposed each other at every point, and became personal enemies. Be it remembered that at this time the general policy of the Government had not been fully settled. Hamilton favored construing the Constitution so as to make the Government very strong, and modelled after the English monarchy. He never fully trusted the people nor believed them capable of self-government. Jefferson was an extreme republican or democrat. He trusted the people implicitly, and used all his powers in furthering the one thing nearest his heart — local self-government. Both men were extremists, almost radicals. Hamilton lived to see the people rise and overthrow his party forever. Jefferson lived to see that a

government carrying out his ideals was an impossibility; and after he became President he was forced to abandon, one by one, some of the very ideals on which his party had been founded.

But Hamilton and Jefferson each committed the serious mistake of misunderstanding the other. Hamilton believed that Jefferson was at the head of a party of fanatics, who might rise at any time and take forcible possession of the Government, as the people of France had done in that country, and spread anarchy on all sides. Jefferson believed that Hamilton was at the head of a great conspiracy, the object of which was to merge the Republic into a monarchy. Both were in error. The Federal party did not aim nor wish to overthrow the Republic and substitute a monarchy; nor was there any danger of Jefferson's party effecting a revolution similar to the French Revolution.

When we bear in mind this misunderstanding between these two National parties, we can see more clearly why partisan hatred became so intense.

The Federal party did great service to the country during its twelve years' supremacy, but

it was never a popular party. On the retirement of Washington, John Adams became President only after a most vigorous contest, and even then he had a majority of but three over Jefferson. Had the Federal party been wise, it would now have seen the necessity of doing something to win the popular heart; but the party seemed bent on its own destruction. It proceeded to enact laws that were sure to drive away the very support that was necessary to its further lease of power. The most prominent of these were the far-famed Alien and Sedition Laws.

Folly of the Federal Party

There was a moment in 1798 when the Federal party seemed to be really popular. It was at the time of the X. Y. Z. explosion, as it was called. There was serious trouble between this country and France. President Adams had sent three men, Gerry, Marshall, and Pinckney, to treat with the French Government. These had a diplomatic correspondence with three Frenchmen representing their government in a semi-official way. These Frenchmen made

demands upon the United States that could not be acceded to with honor, signing themselves X. Y. and Z.[1] It was at this time that Pinckney is said to have used the expression, "Millions for defence, but not one cent for tribute." This correspondence was called for by Congress. The President sent it in April, 1798, and the newspapers soon published it broadcast. This was the explosion.

The outburst of patriotism over the whole country was very enthusiastic. Party differences were lost sight of for the time, and the whole people seemed to join the universal shout. Patriotic songs were written, one of which, "Hail Columbia," written by Joseph Hopkinson for a Philadelphia theatre, still survives. Now this outburst of popular enthusiasm was purely non-partisan, yet the party in power, the party that had brought about the conditions that produced the excitement, might have reaped from it a rich harvest, had the necessary tact been used. But the Federal party was not tactful; it did not build for the future.

When the party found itself on the upper

[1] More accurately, these letters were used by the American commissioners to conceal the names of the Frenchmen.

wave of public approbation, instead of strengthening itself for the future, it stooped to humble a few of its old enemies. It passed several obnoxious laws that tended to weaken it greatly. Not enough to estrange many owners of houses and of slaves by passing the House and Slave Tax Laws; not enough to offend a large portion of the foreign-born population by raising the Naturalization Law to fourteen years, — it went farther and enacted the famous, or rather infamous, Alien and Sedition Laws.

The Alien Law, enacted early in the summer of 1798, was twofold. The first enabled the President to apprehend and send out of the country any alien whom he might consider dangerous or disturbing to society. By the second he was given power to apprehend any alien of any country, which was at war with any other country. It was the former of these that caused a storm of protest. It had been aimed at Frenchmen in the country, and all French sympathizers denounced the law in unmeasured terms. It was opposed on the ground that it violated the Constitution in usurping power over men under the protection

of the respective States in which they dwelled, and in denying them trial by jury. The law expired in two years.

The Sedition Law was also in two sections, one of which made it a serious offence to conspire to oppose any National law. This was opposed by no one; but the other, which made it a crime to print or publish any false, scandalous, or malicious matter against the Government of the United States, either House of Congress, or the President, was most bitterly opposed. This was claimed to be unconstitutional on the ground that the Constitution guaranteed the right of freedom of speech and of the press, and also on the ground that it enlarged the jurisdiction of the Federal courts without legal warrant. The law was not more severe than the libel laws in some of the States, but it took the power from local judges and juries and put it into the hands of Federal officers. There were but two of the Federalist leaders who were wise enough to foresee that this law was likely to work injury to the Federal party. These were Alexander Hamilton and John Marshall; but their protests were not

heeded. This law was aimed at some of the most radical Republican editors, who had been quite reckless in criticising the President and his party.

Most vehemently did the Republican press denounce the Alien and Sedition Laws. "Freedom of speech and liberty of the press," cried the followers of Jefferson, "these are our rights, guaranteed by the Constitution. Who has the right to interfere with them?" This was their chief campaign cry two years later in the National contest, and it won Jefferson thousands of votes from the Federal party.

The Sedition Law in Operation

The Alien Law was never enforced. The Sedition Law, which was to expire with Adams's presidential term, was put into operation soon after its passage. The first victim was Matthew Lyon, a member of the Lower House of Congress from Vermont. Lyon was an Irishman by birth, had been brought to this country as a redemptioner when a boy, had served in the War of the Revolution, and

was now sent to Congress from the State of his adoption. He was an impetuous Republican; he despised all pomp and all monarchial tendency, and became an object of extreme dislike to the Federalists.

Lyon figured in the first physical contest on the floor of the House. While he was speaking one day, Mr. Griswold, one of the Federal leaders who hated him, made an offensive remark in an undertone. Lyon was deeply insulted, and instantly turned and spat in Griswold's face. The excitement became intense among the members, and a motion soon followed to expel Lyon from the House. The motion was lost by a strict party vote. The chagrin and rage of the Federalists was now at the boiling-point, and the trouble was not yet over.

A few days later Griswold came into the House with a heavy stick in his hand, and began beating Lyon with it while the latter was sitting in his seat. Lyon now ran to the fireplace, seized the tongs, and the two statesmen engaged in a rough and tumble fight, rolling over the floor together several times

amid the greatest excitement of the other members. Friends soon parted the combatants, and a motion was made to expel both from the House. But as both had equally offended, their friends decided at length to drop the whole matter, and this was done.

But Matthew Lyon's troubles were only begun. Soon after the Sedition Law took effect, this Vermont statesman found himself arrested and called on to answer for a letter he had published in a Vermont paper criticising the administration. About the severest thing in this letter was this: "Every consideration of the public welfare is swallowed up in a continual grasp for power, an unbounded thirst for ridiculous pomp, foolish adulation, and selfish avarice."

This language was no worse than that used by scores of editors and pamphleteers of both parties; but the Federalists despised this "wild Irishman," as they called him, and improved this opportunity to wreak their vengeance on him. Matthew Lyon was seized, and, after a short trial, was fined one thousand dollars, and sent to prison for four months.

A petition was soon sent to the President begging him to pardon Lyon; but, as the prisoner himself refused to ask for a pardon, President Adams declined to grant it.

There was one occurrence that brought joy to Lyon's heart in the midst of his misfortunes. He was triumphantly reëlected to Congress while still in prison. This proved that the people were still with him.

To pay his fine his friends started a lottery. In those days lotteries were common. Public buildings, school-houses, bridges, court-houses and the like were often built with money raised by lottery. Lyon's friends now took this means of relieving his distress; and Haswell, the editor who called upon the people to support the lottery, used such language as to land himself in prison under the same law!

Thus we have a sample of the practical working of the Sedition Law. About ten men, all editors, fell victims to the law. One man, Thomas Cooper, was imprisoned for saying that "the President was hardly in the infancy of political mistake;" another, named Frothingham, for accusing Hamilton of trying

to purchase a Republican paper in the interest of Federalism.

It was plain that the law was not based on patriotism, nor was it passed for any good purpose. It was vindictive and born of partisan bitterness. But its effect was opposite that intended. It told heavily on the party that had fathered it.

The Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions

Before the close of the year 1798, and while these obnoxious laws were still in force, the Kentucky legislature passed a series of resolutions severely condemning the Alien and Sedition Laws. A few weeks later the legislature of Virginia adopted a series of very similar resolutions, but somewhat milder in tone. These expressions from these two legislative bodies attracted much attention and became famous in American history. It was not known at the time who wrote them; but it was found many years afterward that Thomas Jefferson was the author of the Kentucky Resolutions, and James Madison of the Virginia Resolutions.

The Kentucky Resolutions were nine in number. They had been introduced into the legislature by George Nicholas, who had received them from Jefferson. Nicholas changed and modified them, somewhat. They defined the Union as a compact in which the States were a party, the Constitution being the written agreement defining the powers of the General Government. They pronounced for a strict construction of the Constitution, and claimed that the States as such had the right to judge of the constitutionality of National law, and that any infractions of the Constitution should be opposed by the States. The next year this legislature added a more severe resolution, declaring that the States were sovereign and independent, and that nullification was the rightful remedy for an unconstitutional law.

The Virginia Resolutions were eight in number. They declared if Congress enacted laws that were unconstitutional, it was the right and duty of the States to interpose and arrest the progress of the evil. These resolutions, as well as those of Kentucky, all

aimed directly or indirectly at the Alien and Sedition Laws, and their authors called upon the other States to express themselves on the subject. Several State legislatures answered them, but they all took the opposite ground, claiming that the States had no right to judge of the acts of the Federal Government.

The Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions opened a grave question that was not fully settled for more than half a century, and had to be decided at last by an appeal to the sword. That question was whether the United States of America was simply a compact, a confederation of independent States; or was it a Federal Government, a nation, with all the powers of sovereignty and self-preservation?

South Carolina made much of these resolutions, fathered by the great Jefferson, the Democratic idol, when adopting her Nullification Ordinance in 1832. The school of Southern statesmen, led by Calhoun, based their doctrine of State sovereignty largely on the same ground. Even in 1861 the seceding States of the South, in arguing for the right

of secession, freely quoted the resolutions of Jefferson. But to assert that the Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions were the original cause of nullification and secession, would be to assert altogether too much. The conditions of the North and the South were so unlike that an ultimate conflict between them was inevitable.

Let it be remembered, finally, that these resolutions did not represent the sober, good sense of Thomas Jefferson; this is plainly shown by his public acts and later correspondence. They were written in time of great political excitement, and there is little doubt that the author (for Jefferson, and not Madison, was the real author) felt an honest fear that the Federal party was usurping too much power, and was establishing a dangerous precedent. This he wished to counteract, and he employed the means that promised to be most effective. No American statesman has been more patriotic than Jefferson, and the dismemberment of the Union for any cause was no part of his political creed.

CHAPTER V

Fulton and the Steamboat

We have spoken of the Revolution which took place in this country in the latter part of the eighteenth century. This was a political revolution, and its effect on the American people was far-reaching indeed, while its influence has been felt throughout the world. But there was another revolution that soon followed this, of the industrial world, and its effect on mankind has been even greater than that of the former. This second revolution was brought about, not by the marshalling of armies and the convulsion of nations, but silently, in the brain and the workshop of the man of genius. It came by the invention of steam navigation. The steamboat, the steamship, and the railway have all come into use within the nineteenth century, and their use has revolutionized

Fulton's Predecessors

The steam-engine was invented by a Scotchman, James Watt, some thirty-five years before Fulton's success on the Hudson. But more strictly speaking, Watt simply improved and perfected the clumsy steam-engine of Newcomen, which had been in use for half a century.

The subject of steam navigation had been talked of for many years before Robert Fulton was born, as we now hear of aerial navigation and the like. The first known attempt to apply steam to navigation was by a man wholly unknown to fame, William Henry, a gunsmith of Lancaster,[1] Pennsylvania. Mr. Henry was the leading gunsmith of his province during the French and Indian War. In 1763 he made an engine from models he had seen in England, attached it to a boat with paddles, and experimented on the Conestoga Creek near Lancaster. His attempt was not successful, but it is believed that he was first to originate the idea of the steamboat.

[1] Thurston's "Robert Fulton," p. 30.

In 1786 James Rumsey was experimenting on the Potomac River with a steamboat of his own construction. His plan was to force a stream of water backward and thus propel the boat forward. General Washington saw the working of Rumsey's boat, and stated in a letter that he considered the discovery one of vast importance.

One more of these predecessors, and the most important of all, we must notice — John Fitch. The life of John Fitch was tragical and sad. He was an inventive genius of the first rank, but a more unfortunate man would be hard to name. He was the son of a Connecticut farmer. His father was a hard-hearted man, and his boyhood was passed with little pleasure. Intensely desirous of acquiring knowledge, his stern and niggardly father, though amply able to procure them, refused him the necessary books. On reaching manhood he married a woman with such a bad temper that he could not live with her, and he became a wanderer in the earth.[1]

At the same time that Rumsey was experi-

[1] Parton's "People's Biography," p. 146 *sq.*

menting on the Potomac, we find Fitch with a similar craft on the Delaware. At first he made a very small engine and applied it to a very small boat, and succeeded in running it up-stream at the rate of seven miles an hour. Then he made a boat forty-five feet long and placed in it a larger engine, and soon began to make regular trips from Philadelphia to Bordentown and Trenton. It carried passengers, and in all ran about two thousand miles, when its usefulness was over. The curiosity of the public had been gratified; and as the boat did not pay, the people refused to take further interest in it, believing the whole scheme impracticable.

Not so with Fitch. His soul was on fire with the scheme; he foresaw steam navigation to the uttermost parts of the sea, and he fully believed that the time had come for the new movement to begin. He also believed in himself; he believed that he was capable of carrying out his schemes, and no one at this day doubts that he was right. But he was penniless, the clothes on his back were turning to rags, but he did not care for that. He wanted

money to build another boat, but the public had lost interest in his projects. In vain did he appeal to Congress for assistance, in vain did he try to enlist the aid of wealthy men. At last genius had to flit itself away and die for want of material aid. At last poor John Fitch gave up his hopes with a broken heart. He wandered to the West and settled on a little farm in the wilderness of Kentucky, where he died, some years later, by his own hand. Had he received the needed assistance, there is little doubt that the name of John Fitch would hold the place to-day that is held by that of Robert Fulton.

Early Life of Robert Fulton

While John Fitch was building his boat on the Delaware, there was a young artist aged twenty years, living at Second and Walnut streets, Philadelphia. He was a keen observer of what Fitch was doing. His name was Robert Fulton. He was of Irish descent, and first saw the light on a farm in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, in 1765. At the early age of three years he was left fatherless and

his mother was poor. Robert was sent to school where he made fair progress, but his thoughts were more taken with the workshops of Lancester, to which city the family had moved. He began his career of invention at an early age. When ten years old he made lead-pencils, which were pronounced almost as good as the best made at that time. At the age of thirteen he invented a sky-rocket, and at fourteen an air-gun. Congress had a gun-shop at Lancester during the Revolution, and young Fulton frequented the place until, while still a child, he became an expert gunsmith.

Robert Fulton had also a natural talent for painting, and at the age of seventeen he went to Philadelphia, determined to become an artist. Here he remained for four years, and not only became an excellent artist, but earned money enough to return at the age of twenty-one, and purchase for his mother a small farm. This done, the ambitious youth sailed for Europe to seek his fortune in the great world.

Fulton in Foreign Lands

He went to London and sought the home of Benjamin West, the great American artist, then residing in that city. West had been born in the same State with Fulton, Pennsylvania; their fathers had been old friends, and now the world-famous artist opened wide his door to the aspiring boy from his own land. Fulton became a pupil of West and resided in his house for several years.

But while Robert Fulton was a successful artist, he was not a great artist, and none knew it better than himself. His mind reverted to the inventions and aspirations of his childhood, and at length he decided to give up painting and become a civil engineer and an inventor. He remained several years longer in England and while there invented a machine for sawing marble, and another for spinning flax, and still another for making ropes. He next invented a mechanical power-shovel which was used in England for many years. He was also the originator of the submarine torpedo used for destroying vessels of war. Among

his intimate acquaintances were many of the leading men in England. He was the author of several books on various mechanical subjects. During all this period his mind was full of steam navigation. The papers of Fitch had fallen into his hands, and he studied them with the utmost care.

In 1802 he went to France, and in Paris he met a friend who proved to be the benefactor of his life. It was Robert R. Livingston of New York, the man who had pronounced the oath of office to President Washington, and who was now minister to France. Livingston had also been thinking much of navigation by steam. He had not genius, it is true; but he had something else almost equally necessary — he had money. In a short time a compact was made between Livingston and Fulton, and their aim was to navigate the Seine River by steam, the former furnishing the money, the latter the brains.

Fulton soon had his boat ready, sixty-six feet in length, and to this an engine was adapted. The time was at hand for making the trial trip. Fulton had spent a sleepless

night, and on rising in the morning a messenger from the boat, with despair in his face, rushed into his room, and exclaimed: —

"Oh, sir, the boat has broken to pieces and gone to the bottom!"

Fulton was overwhelmed with grief. Hastening to the river, he instantly began the task of raising the vessel with his own hands, and he kept at it, without food or rest, for twenty-four hours. From the injury to his health, occasioned by this exertion, he never fully recovered.

In a few weeks the vessel had been raised and rebuilt, and at the trial trip in July, 1803, a vast crowd of people stood on the banks of the river and shouted their acclamations of approval. But Fulton saw that the vessel was imperfect, and that a new engine must be procured. As Chancellor Livington was now about to sail for America, it was decided that the next experiment be made on the Hudson River.

The Clermont on the Hudson

Robert Fulton was not the inventor of the steamboat, as is commonly supposed; but he was the first to put it into practical use. The poet Lowell has said:—

> "Though old the thought and oft expressed,
> 'Tis his at last who says it best."

This is true in mechanics as well as in poetry. Fulton adopted and improved on the ideas of William Henry, of James Rumsey, of John Fitch, and others, and where they had failed he succeeded. The world applauds success, but it seldom forgives the one who fails. Fulton has received the honor that he deserved, while the others, scarcely less deserving, have been forgotten by the great public.

Again, the highest peak in a mountain system is the noted one; others almost as lofty are scarcely noticed. Methuselah is the world's example of great age, while few consider that there were others who lacked but a few years of reaching the same age. So with the inventors of the steamboat. At the time Fulton was building the *Clermont* there were movements of

the same kind in various parts of the world, independent of his. The scientific world at that moment was absorbed with the one great subject — navigation by steam. Fulton had great advantages; he had a monopoly of the Hudson River, he had Livingston as his partner. Perhaps he was the greatest genius of them all; at least he succeeded first; thus he gained public applause, and became the popular hero. His fame is now world-wide, and perhaps will never diminish.

But who besides specialists and historians has heard of John Stephens? He was an inventive genius of great skill. Having received his ideas of steam navigation from Fitch, he labored for years to construct a steamboat. He succeeded at last in 1807 — just *after* Fulton had won the popular heart. In a few years he had steamboats plying on the Delaware and Connecticut rivers. Had it not been for Fulton, Stephens would probably to-day be honored as the inventor of the steamboat.

Let us return to our subject. Fulton and Livingston determined to make their next

attempt in America. They ordered a steam engine of Watt, in England, without revealing the object for which it was intended. Fulton went to England to oversee its construction, which took nearly three years. It reached New York in 1806, and its owners soon had a boat one hundred and thirty-three feet long, of one hundred and sixty tons. The steam-power was applied by means of a paddle-wheel. Fitch had employed an endless chain with paddles attached, and Stephens used a screw-propeller.

Fulton named his boat the *Clermont*, after Livingston's country-seat on the Hudson. The trial trip was made in August, 1807. A vast crowd of people stood on the banks of the river to witness the experiment, few believing it would be successful. The moment came, and the *Clermont* moved out into the river, running against the current at the rate of four miles an hour.

The trip to Albany, one hundred and fifty miles, was covered in thirty-two hours, an average of nearly five miles an hour, while the return trip took but thirty hours.

The boat was described as "a monster moving on the waters, defying wind and tide, breathing flames and smoke." The fuel used was dry pine, and the flames rose above the smoke-pipe. It was said that in some of the vessels met by the *Clermont*, "the crews shrank beneath the decks from the terrific sight and let their vessels run ashore; while others prostrated themselves and besought Providence to protect them from the horrible monster which was marching on the tides, and lighting its path by the fires which it vomited."

The great question was now settled; navigation by steam was an assured fact. A New York paper made the statement that there would soon be steamboats on the Mississippi, and it was believed that they would make two miles an hour against its strong current. What would the editor have thought had he foreseen that long before the century's close the sea would be covered with steamships, some of twelve thousand tons burden, "ocean greyhounds," that would cross the Atlantic in less than six days, averaging more than twenty miles an hour!

After the *Clermont* had made her successful trial trip, she was scheduled to make regular trips twice a week from New York City to Albany, the charge for a passenger being seven dollars each way. She was usually loaded with passengers, and the owners found the business a paying one from the start. During the winter the *Clermont* was enlarged and repaired, and two other steamboats, the *Raritan* and the *Car of Neptune*, were added to the service the following year. Within seven years Fulton had twelve steamboats, all built under his directions, plying the waters around New York.

Robert Fulton was the hero of the hour. He was a tall, handsome man, rather slenderly built, graceful and refined. He had risen socially as well as otherwise; he had married a niece of Chancellor Livingston, and his associates were the leading men of Europe and America. His name was on every tongue, but he was very modest and gave his whole energy to the further improvement of the use of steam-power. But he was not long left to enjoy his triumph. Death claimed him while in the midst of his useful life. In January, 1815, he was

called to Trenton to testify in a court trial. On his return he crossed the Hudson in an open boat amid heavy floating ice. He caught a severe cold which resulted in a serious illness. When only partially recovered he went to the Brooklyn navy-yard to oversee the building of a vessel, and was exposed to the cold for several hours. He suffered a relapse, and on February the 24th he died, aged fifty years. Seldom in our history has the death of a private citizen caused such universal mourning as did that of Robert Fulton. But his work was done. He had risen from the ranks of the lowly and achieved the highest success. He did a great service for mankind, and the glory of his fame will not fade.

CHAPTER VI

The Lewis and Clarke Expedition[1]

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the Great West, from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean, was a vast, unbroken wilderness. Before such a region can be claimed for civilization — even before the pioneer makes his home in the forest — must come the explorer. The most notable exploring expedition since De Soto and Marquette was that of Lewis and Clarke in the great Northwest.

The father of this expedition was Thomas Jefferson. As early as 1792 he proposed to the American Philosophical Society that an expedition be sent up the Missouri River to cross the "Stony Mountains," as the Rocky Mountains were then called, and to follow the nearest river to the Pacific. When he became President in 1801, his pet project was still on

[1] For the material of this chapter I have drawn largely on the account of H. H. Bancroft, Vol. X. — E.

his mind, and this desire was greatly intensified two years later by the Louisiana Purchase, which added a vast territory of unknown bounds to the public domain.

There was a young man in Jefferson's employ as private secretary, named Meriwether Lewis, who was very anxious to lead the proposed exploring party. He had been a captain in the army, and Jefferson, knowing him to be a man of a daring, adventurous spirit, of truthfulness and discretion, appointed him to the command. Lewis was elated with his appointment; he hastened to Philadelphia, and spent several months in the study of geography, botany, and astronomy, that he might be able to do the work before him the more intelligently.

The instructions were written in Jefferson's own hand, and were signed in June, 1803. By them Lewis was directed to provide himself with arms and ammunition, with tents, boats, provisions, and medicines, and also with many articles for presents and barter with the Indians. Lewis chose Captain William Clarke of the United States Army as second in command, and proceeded to Pittsburg in July

where part of his outfit was to be provided. Later in the summer he went down the Ohio and up the Mississippi, and encamped for the winter with his company on the eastern bank of that river, opposite the mouth of the Missouri. The winter was spent in drilling the men, and in making preparation for the ascent of the Missouri in the early spring.

The expedition was composed of twenty-eight men, half of whom were soldiers; nine were young Kentuckians, two Frenchmen, one was a hunter, one an interpreter, and the remaining one a negro servant of Captain Clarke. In the company we find the famous scout and Indian fighter, Lewis Wetzel. In all our history of Indian warfare Lewis Wetzel stands without a superior in daring and reckless bravery. Escaping at the age of thirteen from a band of Indians who had murdered his father, he took a solemn oath that he would kill every Indian that it came in his power to kill as long as he should live — and he kept his word. He could follow a trail with the keenness of a bloodhound; he could load his rifle while running at his highest

speed; and woe to the dusky warrior that came within range of his deadly aim! Captain Clarke, knowing of Wetzel's unerring aim and his wonderful knowledge of the woods, and believing that he would make a valuable member of the party, persuaded him to join it. But Wetzel was accustomed to the wild freedom of the wilderness; he disliked the military discipline of an organized expedition; and, after accompanying them for three months, suddenly left them and returned to his native haunts on the Ohio.

Ascending the Missouri

The party embarked in three boats on May 14, 1804, and ascended the Missouri at the rate of twelve to fifteen miles per day. Their largest boat was fifty-five feet long, and carried one sail and twenty-two oars. They had gone but eight days when they made their first trade with Indians — two quarts of whiskey for four fine deer. The forests were full of game and the rivers abounded with fish, both of which they secured in abundance. After they had journeyed some weeks they frequently met

with Indian tribes, most of whom were quite friendly.

One day in July, soon after they had passed the mouth of the Platte River, one of the party, while hunting in the forest, came upon three Indians dressing an elk. They belonged to the tribe of the Ottoes, and it was arranged that the tribe hold council with the explorers. The latter chose a bluff on the east bank of the river, where they pitched their tents and awaited the Indians. The view from this place was one of striking beauty. In the distance were seen groves of cottonwood and elm, rising here and there from the prairie, and the majestic river winding silently away among the hills.

The conference was held on the 3d of August, and the Indian chiefs were presented with medals and other trinkets. They seemed greatly pleased with their strange white visitors from the East. The council being held on a bluff of the river, the place was called Council Bluffs, a name retained by the flourishing city and railway centre that afterward grew up on the spot. Two weeks later they encamped at

the mouth of a little river where now Sioux City, Iowa, is situated. One of their number, Mr. Floyd, had died, and they gave his name to the river. Here they held council with the Mahas tribe, and some miles farther up, with the Sioux. Similar councils were held with many other tribes. These Indians were highly pleased with the whiskey and trinkets received from the white men. But there was one tribe, the Ricaras, that refused to accept whiskey. "Why," they asked, "should they be offered drink which made fools of them?"

The expedition had, by the last of October, penetrated far into the Northwest Territory; the weather was now growing cold, and the men determined to stop for the winter. They built several strong log houses, and found them quite comfortable. The blacksmith of the party put up a furnace, and made knife-blades and spear-points, which they traded to the natives for corn. The Indians were greatly taken with the bellows; they thought it a marvellous thing indeed.

As spring approached the party prepared to plunge still farther into the boundless

wilderness. The large boat could not be taken farther, as the river was growing more rapid; it was therefore turned back and headed for St. Louis. An escort of several men, who had thus far accompanied the expedition, returned with the boat and took with them several boxes sent by Captain Lewis to President Jefferson. These boxes were filled with specimens of earth, minerals, native implements, and stuffed birds and animals. The two parties separated - the one for the haunts of civilization, the other for the unknown Rocky Mountain region — on the afternoon of April the 7th, 1805.

The expedition had now been a year on the way; but there were many weary miles yet to be traversed. They soon passed the mouth of the Yellowstone, then the Milk River, which they so named because of the peculiar whiteness of the water, and on they pressed toward the Rocky Mountains. In this remote region they found wild animals in great abundance. The country literally swarmed with buffalo, wolves, bears, and coyotes, prairie dogs, and many other animals. Captain Lewis

was one day chased by a wounded white bear and narrowly escaped destruction.

On the 26th of May, Lewis ascended a hill and cast his eyes westward. He now saw for the first time the crest of the Rocky Mountains, far away in the western horizon. The lofty summits seemed to penetrate the skies and the captain was deeply moved with the magnificence of the scene. He wrote in his journal that he "had got the first glimpse of the great Rocky Mountains, the object of all our hopes and the reward of all our ambitions."

One day, as the men were walking over the plain, they heard an awful rumbling in the sky, and were soon overtaken by a hailstorm, the most terrific they had ever seen. All the men were knocked, bruised and bleeding, to the ground, Captain Clarke narrowly escaping with his life.

On the 13th of June the party reached the Great Falls of the Missouri. They had heard the mighty roar for several hours; now they stood before one of the grandest spectacles of falling water in the world. The river

descends the mountain side about three hundred and sixty feet in the course of sixteen miles. There are four different cataracts, the largest being a leap of eighty-seven feet over a perpendicular wall. Between the cataracts are rapids where the water leaps and rages as if possessed by evil spirits. Far above the mad, seething river rises a cloud of rainbow-tinted spray, which floats peacefully away over the forest until dissolved into air by the sun.

On to the Pacific

On reaching the great falls the party were obliged to carry their canoes for eighteen miles, when they again made use of the river. After a journey of one hundred and forty-five miles from the falls they reach a place where the Missouri breaks through great mountain walls many hundred feet in height, and they call it the "Gates of the Rocky Mountains." They are still four hundred miles from the source of the river, and their journey continues.

Many interesting incidents occur as they journey along. One morning Captain Lewis

awoke and found that a huge rattlesnake had coiled itself around the tree beneath which he had slept, where it kept watch over him, but did him no harm. On one occasion the party was divided into two parts and came near losing each other owing to the impudence of a little beaver. One company led by Lewis came to the forks of a small river, and he left a letter placed on a pole for Clarke, directing him to take the stream to the left. Along came the beaver and deliberately cut down the pole with his teeth, and carried it away, letter and all. Clarke took the wrong branch, and it was several days before the parties were reunited.

The party had with them an Indian woman of the Shoshone tribe, who had been taken captive by another tribe about five years before Being informed through the interpreter who the white men were and whither going, she was induced to go with them in the hope of again finding her own people. Captain Lewis was pleased with this, as he hoped to make friends with the Shoshones by bringing back their lost one. While in advance of the rest

one day in August he saw, about two miles across the plain, a man on horseback, and by the aid of his glass he saw that it was an Indian warrior whom he believed to be a Shoshone. Lewis approached cautiously, but when within a few hundred yards the savage wheeled his horse and soon vanished in the wilderness.

For some days they searched for these Indians, their object being to secure guides and horses, for the faithful Missouri had at last dwindled to a rivulet, and could guide them and bear them no longer. Several times they sighted Indians, but each time they ran like frightened deer. After several days' search they came suddenly upon two women, one of whom escaped, but the other was captured. She stood expecting instant death; but Lewis soon convinced her that there was nothing to fear, and persuaded her to lead them to her tribe. While on the way they were met by sixty armed warriors, coming to her rescue; but when she convinced them of the character of the newcomers, and when they beheld the other woman, who had been stolen

from them several years before, now brought back in safety by the strangers, their hostility was changed to the wildest demonstrations of joy. They leaped from their horses and embraced the white men, besmearing the clothes and faces of the latter with paint and grease. It is needless to say that our party had no further trouble securing guides and horses.

The expedition had now reached the watershed which divides the vast basin of the Mississippi Valley from the Pacific Slope; and one can imagine a tiny drop of water falling from the clouds and being divided by the upturned edge of a leaf, the one half finding its way to the Atlantic Ocean by way of the Missouri, the Mississippi, and the Gulf of Mexico, the other flowing into the Pacific by way of the Columbia River. Here was the great divide, the culmination of the Rocky Mountain system, the birthplace of mighty rivers. From this point our party must traverse the rugged mountains on horseback and on foot, leaving behind their canoes, until they reach the head waters of the Columbia, that noble river of the Pacific Slope,

which had been partially explored thirteen years before by Captain Grey, and to which he had given the name of his ship—the *Columbia*.

We shall not attempt to trace their further course in detail, as their experience was similar to that already given. The party discovered many rivers and creeks to which they gave names. They evidently had no poet in the company, as the names they conferred are peculiarly devoid of euphonic beauty. After exhausting their vocabulary, they conferred the names of the President and his cabinet on rivers. We find the Jefferson, the Madison, the Gallatin, and the Dearborn rivers. Then they used the names of the men of their own company till all were exhausted. The Lewis River, the Clarke River, the John Day River, are found among them. Even the negro servant, York, was honored by having a river called by his name. Sometimes they gave such pedantic names as Philosophy, Philanthropy, and Independence to the rivers. When they discovered one river, a large bear was standing on the bank, and they called it Bear River. One day

they encamped on a bank of a stream where game was scarce, and they killed a colt for food; they called it the Coltkilled River. Some of these names have been changed, but many are still retained.

On the 28th of September our explorers found themselves in the presence of Mount Hood, rising to the clouds in all its grandeur and magnificence. On they marched, passing dangerous shoals and rapids in the upper Columbia, and suffering many hardships. But they were amply repaid with many romantic scenes — cascades of marvellous beauty, snow-capped mountain ridges skirted at the base with gigantic forests, with here and there an open space of the most luxuriant vegetation, now adorned with the richest autumnal hues.

On the morning of November 7, 1806, after a journey of a year and a half through the unbroken wilderness, they first saw the blue line in the western horizon that told them that the goal of their wanderings was at hand. It was the Pacific Ocean. At last they had reached that boundless watery plain upon which Balboa had gazed with a swelling soul, through which

Magellan had ploughed with his hardy seamen until he had belted the globe.

The Return to the United States

The exploring party spent the winter in log cabins of their own construction, near the mouth of a river, and they called the place Fort Clatsop. During the winter they made several exploring expeditions, and were visited by various Indian tribes. On March 23, 1807, they began their return journey. They ascended the Columbia River in canoes to its head waters, when they crossed the mountains on horses secured from the Indians whom they had seen the year before. Most of these they found still friendly, while others were becoming suspicious of the white invaders of their forest home. The Walla Wallas were so cordial that the party, after remaining with them some days, found it difficult to get leave to depart. Later they encountered a tribe that was disposed to be treacherous, and Lewis was obliged to shoot an Indian to save his own life.

The return trip was covered more rapidly than the advance had been, especially after

they reached the Missouri, on which they floated with the current. The expedition reached St. Louis, September 23, 1807, having traversed nine thousand miles of unexplored wilderness in two and a half years. They had experienced but few accidents, and had lost but one man. Their journal was published a few years later, and it conveyed much important information concerning the Great West. Congress made grants of land to each member, of the party, besides a soldier's pay for the time spent.

Captain Lewis became governor of Louisiana Territory, and Clarke a general of militia, afterward governor of Missouri. Two years later Lewis was attacked by a hereditary disease, and, in a temporary season of insanity, took his own life. Clarke's negro servant, York, now took Lewis's name, and called himself Captain Lewis to the end of his life, dying some years ago in Virginia at the great age of ninety years.

An Indian Story

A member of the Lewis and Clarke expedition named John Colter, while on the return

trip, asked and was granted leave to remain in the wilderness as a hunter and trapper. He associated himself with a trapper named Potts, and the two were soon busy capturing fur-bearing animals. They were in the heart of the Blackfoot Indian country, and these savages were known to be hostile at the time.

One day as Colter and Potts were sitting in their canoe on the edge of a small stream they heard, from behind a neighboring hill, the tramp of innumerable feet. At first they feared that it was Indians; then they thought it was a herd of buffalo. In a few minutes their worst fears were realized. Six hundred savage warriors swarmed around the hill, and the two trappers were unable to escape. Potts raised his rifle, shot down the foremost Indian, and his body was instantly pierced by a score of arrows. The canoe floated away, bearing his dead body. Colter was taken captive.

The savages had no thought of sparing Colter's life, but they decided to toy with him, as a kitten toys with a mouse before killing it — but sometimes the mouse finds a hole and escapes. Colter was first stripped

to the skin, not a shred of clothes being left on his body. He was then asked if he were a good runner, and he answered that he was not. The chief then took him about three hundred yards from the body of Indians, let him go, and said, "Now save your life, if you can."

At that instant the six hundred savages, with a terrible war-whoop, started in pursuit. Colter darted away with a speed that surprised himself as well as his pursuers. There was a plain before him six miles wide, bounded on the farther side by a river fringed with trees. Colter made for this stream, and the unearthly, demon-like yells of the on-rushing savages seemed to lend him wings. The plain was covered with prickly pears, and, being without moccasins, his feet were lacerated at every stride. He ran about three miles before looking back; then, glancing over his shoulder, he saw that all but a few were left far behind. One huge warrior, however, armed with a spear, was but two hundred yards away and gaining. Colter doubled the effort, and so great was his exertion that the blood gushed from his nostrils and flowed down over his breast. When within a mile of the

river, he glanced back again and saw that his pursuer was but few paces away, and was almost in the act of throwing his spear.

Colter, moved by a sudden impulse, stopped and faced the savage, spreading out his arms, and thus stood in the form of a cross. The Indian was so surprised at this unexpected movement and at the bloody appearance of the white man's body, that he stumbled and fell to the ground. Colter ran back, seized the spear, ran it through his antagonist's body, pinning him to the earth, and renewed his flight.

The pursuing savages halted a few seconds over the dead body of their comrade, thus giving Colter an increased advantage. Now they again resumed the pursuit with more fiendish yells than before. But Colter was nearing the river, and was soon hidden by the trees. The next moment he plunged beneath the waves. In the middle of the river, lodged against an island, was a large raft of drift-wood. Beneath this our hero dived, and stuck his head up between two logs covered with smaller timbers and brush. The Indians came up and searched for several hours, but failed

to find him. Again and again he could see them walking above him over the driftwood. He was terribly afraid they would set fire to it, but they did not.

At nightfall the savages left, and Colter swam out and was soon speeding through the forest. After travelling for seven days, utterly unclothed, and with nothing to eat but roots, he reached a trading-post on the Big Horn River. It was several months before he fully recovered from his terrible experience.

CHAPTER VII

Conspiracy of Aaron Burr

The world is inclined to go to extremes in placing its stamp of value on the most conspicuous public characters. It is true, there is a great middle class of prominent men who are rated, after they are gone, at something near their real worth; but the people must have their hero, their demigod, their type of all perfection; they must also have their monstrosity, their type of all villany. From the same trait of human nature that tends to adore too much, springs the tendency to despise too much. The drama must have its hero and its villain, and if either falls below perfection in his *rôle*, the imagination supplies the deficiency.

Some of the greatest characters in history were not so great nor so perfect in real life as posterity has made them; and it is cer-

tain that some of the villains of history were not so monstrous as they have been pictured. History in the abstract is truth, because it pictures human nature as it really was and is; but it is not always true in the concrete; it overdraws some characters at the expense of others.

Aaron Burr

This chapter is not intended to be a defence of the character with whom it deals, but the author wishes to state his belief at the outstart that Aaron Burr has been judged too severely by the American people; that he was not so deep-dyed a villain as is generally supposed. It is true that he slew the great Hamilton in a duel; but duels were common in those days, and he who accepted a challenge was scarcely less blamable than he who gave it. It is true, or is supposed to be true, that he aimed to sever the Union and to set up a Western Empire with himself at the head. But let it be remembered that in those days there was a general belief that the East and West would eventually become

separate nations; that so unlike were their interests, and so great their distance apart, as to render their continuance in the same household impossible; and that it is still believed that but for the railway and the telegraph, which have brought us so near together as a people, the ultimate separation of the East and the West would have been inevitable.

Nevertheless, Burr was a bad character; his ambition was not that of the patriot, but of the self-seeker; his killing of Hamilton was little short of murder, as he knew that his skill with the pistol far exceeded that of his antagonist, and he was fully determined to end the career of the latter. But he had his redeeming traits. He was a great lover of children; his perennial exuberance of spirits under the most crushing trials excites our highest admiration; his devotion to his daughter was strangely beautiful.

Aaron Burr was a descendant of the great New England divine of colonial days, Jonathan Edwards. Scarcely more than a boy at the outbreak of the Revolution, he flung himself into the midst of the fray, and proved

to be one of the bravest of the brave. He afterward entered the legal profession and became one of the keenest and most successful lawyers in America. He entered politics and rose until he became a senator, then Vice-President of the United States. His wife had died and left him a little daughter named Theodosia, a beautiful girl of the rarest mental gifts, who, while yet a child, presided over her father's luxuriant home with the grace of a princess. The father adored his charming daughter, and lavished upon her every luxury that wealth could bestow; but she did not become a spoiled child; her good sense was of the highest grade, and her devotion to her father was something wonderful.

But an evil day came, and the happiness of the family became forever blighted. The misfortune began with the death of Hamilton. It had been coming, it is true, for some time before. Hamilton was but one of the powerful politicians who had combined to break the political fortunes in New York and in the nation of Aaron Burr. They succeeded, and in the spring of 1804 Burr found himself

politically and financially ruined. Up to that time he had been a political aspirant not unlike others of his station. His private life was not pure, but it was no worse than that of many others of his own class. Had he been elected President of the United States in 1801, when he came so near the prize, he would doubtless now be classed among the honored fathers. Had he borne his later defeat in New York in silence, as many a man has borne equal disappointments, his name would not now be covered with odium.

But Burr was a vindictive man. He brooded over his downfall. He thought Hamilton the chief cause of it, and determined to rid himself of his great rival. He challenged him to a duel. The false code of honor of that day was such that one could not refuse such a challenge without being branded as a coward, and Hamilton had not the moral courage to defy public opinion, and refuse to fight a duel. He accepted the challenge. They met at Weehawken, on the New Jersey shore of the Hudson, on July 11, 1804. Hamilton fell at the first fire, mortally wounded. In a few

hours he was dead. Burr had *legally* slain his enemy. He may have experienced a momentary thrill of joy at the result. The truth may not at that moment have entered his brain that his fatal bullet had added a lustre for all time to the name of his fallen victim, and had covered his own with indelible dishonor.

If ever there was a man who received due punishment in this life for his wrong-doing, it was Aaron Burr. From this day forth his every project was marked with failure. He lived to be old, and through all his subsequent years, misfortune pursued him, like the Nemesis of evil, with unrelenting severity.

Scarcely had the breath left Hamilton's body, when public feeling in New York, regardless of party, was roused against his slayer. Burr, to escape the popular indignation, quietly left the city for Philadelphia, but here he found the same state of feeling against him, and he fled to the South, where he remained for several months. When the excitement had somewhat abated, he returned northward, and spent the winter in Washington and

Philadelphia; but the public feeling was still such that he thought best not to remain, and he decided on making a tour of the West.

At that time a tide of emigration was pouring into the Mississippi Valley, new States were being carved out of the wilderness, and new cities were growing up in many places.

Burr determined to go westward, but what his ultimate intentions were no one seemed to surmise. His friends proposed (for he still had friends) that he settle in some rising Western city, and get himself elected to Congress. This would no doubt have been easy to do, for very few men of his mental caliber could be found west of the Alleghanies, and he was still popular in the Mississippi Valley. Had he chosen such a course, he could have in a great measure lived down the odium arising from the duel, but he was too ambitious for such a quiet life. This plan, it was afterward believed, was intended only to hide his real designs.

He left Philadelphia in April, 1805; in nineteen days he had reached Pittsburg, and was soon floating down the Ohio. The Ohio is

one of the most beautiful of rivers. For hundreds of miles it coils itself among the hills, which often rise in rocky steeps from the water's edge, skirted along the base and crowned at the top with primeval forest. Onward the little party proceed until they reach Marietta, that quaint old town that had been founded seventeen years before by Rufus Putnam, the "Father of Ohio," and named in honor of the unfortunate queen of France. Here they alight and inspect those strange mounds, the relics of an unknown race, at the mouth of the Muskingum.

A few miles below Marietta there is an island in the river that was soon to become famous, and was to be known henceforth as the Blennerhassett Island. It lies low in the river, is about three miles long and quite narrow. On this island Harman Blennerhassett, an eccentric, romantic Irishman, with an equally romantic wife, had made his home. He had been a barrister in his own country, had inherited a snug fortune, and brought it, with his wife, to America. Their thirst for the novel and the romantic had led them to

penetrate the western wilderness, and to locate on this island, where they built a curious house, modelled after some of the ancient structures of the Old World. Here they lived in apparent contentment for several years.

Leaving Marietta, Burr came to this island, and having heard of the eccentric foreigner who dwelled there, made a landing out of mere curiosity. Hearing that the proprietor was absent, he did not go to the house, but strolled about the grounds, when Mrs. Blennerhassett sent a servant to invite the strangers to the house. Burr sent his card with a polite refusal; but, when the lady saw his name, she came out and gave him a pressing invitation to remain to dinner. He now consented, and the party spent several hours in pleasant conversation, when they reembarked and proceeded to Cincinnati. After a few days' stay at this growing village, Burr descended the river to the Falls of the Ohio, where Louisville now stands. At this point he left the river, and made an overland journey through the wilderness to Nashville. A travelling showman had lately been at Nashville, and

had exhibited a wax figure of Burr "as he appeared when he slew the leviathan of Federalism under the heights of Weehawken."[1] Burr received high honors at Nashville, where he remained for some days at the home of Andrew Jackson.

The Great Conspiracy

Burr's plans had now taken shape in his own mind. There was continuous friction between the Americans and Spaniards in the Southwest, and Burr gave out that he intended to conduct a military expedition against Mexico, which then belonged to Spain. But an inner circle knew that his designs were still deeper, that his aim was to raise a revolt in the Mississippi Valley, to sever it from the Union, and to establish an independent nation. This Burr had suggested to the English Minister, Mr. Merry, before leaving Philadelphia. At Cincinnati he had met and conferred with Mr. Dayton, former Speaker of the House of Representatives, and with ex-Senator John Smith of Ohio, both of

[1] McMaster, Vol. III. p. 57.

whom were afterward found to be in his plot. Some have even named Andrew Jackson as one of the conspirators, but there is no proof of this; and Jackson's unswerving patriotism before and after this period was such as to make this accusation difficult to believe.

Burr went down the Cumberland from Nashville. On reaching the mouth of the Ohio, he met the man who was to be his confederate, and afterward his betrayer — General James Wilkinson. Wilkinson was commander of the armies of the United States and governor of Louisiana at the time. He was a man of ambition no less sordid than that of Burr. The two had long been acquainted; they had fought together under the walls of Quebec in the Revolution, and had corresponded with each other for many years. Burr now took Wilkinson into his plot, and the two men spent four days together, laying their schemes for the future. Wilkinson then fitted Burr out in a fine boat in which he proceeded to New Orleans, where he arrived on June 25, 1805, armed with a letter from Wilkinson to Daniel Clark, the richest man in the city.

For two weeks Burr was lionized in New Orleans, and his proposed expedition to Mex ico, no longer a secret, was talked of on all sides. Returning up the river, Burr again met with Wilkinson, but found the ardor of that gentlemen somewhat cooled. The fact is, Wilkinson had sounded his subordinate officers on the subject of dismembering the Union, and had received so little encouragement that his enthusiasm had greatly subsided.

Late in the fall Burr returned to Washington. He had counted much on receiving aid from England, believing that country ready to engage in any project that would retard the growth of the United States. Hastening to the house of the British Minister, Burr was greatly dismayed when that gentlemen informed him that no assistance from that quarter could be expected. But the will of Burr was indomitable. During the few months he spent in the East his efforts were prodigious. He sought out his old friends, army and navy officials, men of wealth, and every one who had a grievance against the Government, and attempted to bring them into his plot. By

one of these, General Eaton, he was betrayed to President Jefferson, but Jefferson was slow to believe that there was any real danger, and made no attempt to apprehend the conspirators. Burr stated to a friend that the Government was in such an imbecile condition that with two hundred men he could drive the President and Congress into the Potomac.

In August, 1806, Burr again started westward, taking with him this time his daughter Theodosia, who was now the wife of Joseph Alston, the governor of South Carolina, reputed to be the richest planter in the South. They soon reached Blennerhassett Island, and the occupants were completely captivated by the wit and the vivacity of the charming Theodosia, who fully believed that her father's schemes were legitimate and honorable. From this time the Blennerhassetts were the most devoted adherents of the conspirator.

This credulous Irishman was led to believe that all their projects were about to be realized. A great nation was to be founded in the West. Burr was to be the monarch as Aaron I., Mrs. Alston was to be the queen,

and her little son heir apparent to the throne. But this was not all; Blennerhassett should represent the new nation at the court of St. James, and Wilkinson should command its armies. This was the vision presented to the simple-minded Blennerhassett, and he chattered it all around the country.

Leaving his daughter on the island, Burr went down the river to Cincinnati, and across to Nashville. All was now haste and activity. Fifteen boats were being built at Marietta, several more on the Cumberland. Provisions were purchased and men were arming on all sides and making ready for the expedition, most of whom still believed that the sole object was the conquest of Mexico. Burr was the general manager of everything. We find him first in one town and then in another, displaying the most remarkable energy.

But he had enemies here and there. At Frankfort, Kentucky, he was tried in a United States court for treason, but was acquitted. One of his counsel in this trial was a young man whose after career made him a name that the Nation still delights to honor — Henry Clay.

Burr again went to Nashville, and a great ball was given in his honor. His hopes were now at their highest point. He was soon to become a conquering hero — one who would draw the eyes of the world — the founder of an empire — when lo! a thunderbolt came, and his whole scheme from the top to the bottom was shattered and annihilated. The bolt came in the form of a proclamation from the President of the United States.

The Arrest and the Trial

President Jefferson had at last been awakened from his lethargy and led to believe that there was some real danger of an uprising in the Mississippi Valley. Hence the proclamation, issued in November, 1806, which was called forth by a letter from General Wilkinson, betraying Burr's entire plot to the President. When this proclamation was known in the West, it was no longer possible for Burr to proceed, because many of his followers had been made to believe that Jefferson knew of and favored the expedition; when they found that this was not true, they refused to follow

their leader further. The President in his proclamation did not mention Burr by name, nor make any reference to the plan of severing the Union. He simply stated that there was reason to believe that an unauthorized expedition against Mexico was about to be made, and he called upon all United States officers to immediately arrest all persons engaged in it.

Wilkinson, now in New Orleans, in order to clear his own name, made a desperate effort to pose as the saviour of his country. He made the people believe that a fleet was about to come down the Mississippi to capture the city. He harangued the excited multitude at a public meeting; he made many arrests of suspected persons, and put the city under martial law. In short, this mighty (but it should be spelled mitey) commander of the army blustered and fumed about at a great rate. But it was all unnecessary. There was no armed force coming down the river, and Wilkinson probably knew it. He simply wished to make a loud noise, a patriotic noise, so as to cover his own false trail of the past.

Aaron Burr at this time was floating down the Mississippi with a few friends, hoping to escape arrest till he reached the sea, when he would embark for a foreign land. None knew better than himself that Jefferson's note of warning to the people had utterly blasted his prospects. None knew better than he that, if arrested, he would have to contend against an angered administration, supported by the enemies he had made in the killing of Hamilton. As he proceeded down the river he was astonished and dismayed to find that his colleague, Wilkinson, had betrayed him. A short distance above Natchez, Mississippi, Burr landed on the east bank of the river, and, disguising himself in the dress of a river boatman, he bade his companions good-by and disappeared in the wilderness.

One cold night in February, 1807, two young lawyers were playing at cards in a cabin near the village of Wakefield, Alabama, when two strangers rode up and inquired the way to Colonel Hinson's. Being informed that the colonel lived seven miles farther on, the strangers departed. One of them, it was

readily seen, was a country guide; the other seemed to be a different sort of personage. He was dressed in a rude homespun suit, but his intellectual countenance, his flashing, bright eyes, and his elegantly shaped boots, protruding from the coarse, ill-cut trousers, attracted the attention of one of the young men, whose name was Perkins.

Soon after the strangers had gone, Perkins said to his companion, "That is Aaron Burr; let us follow and arrest him." [1]

The other ridiculed the idea and refused to make any move toward making the arrest. But Perkins was determined; he at once apprised the sheriff, and in a short time he and the sheriff were riding through the darkness toward Colonel Hinson's.

Arriving near the place, Perkins remained outside with the horses while the sheriff went in to make the arrest. He met the polite stranger, and was soon fascinated with his brilliant conversation. For some hours the company conversed, and this stranger was the life of the party. The sheriff had not a doubt

[1] Parton's "Life of Aaron Burr," Vol. II. p. 93.

that it was Burr, but his heart failed him; he could not arrest so elegant a gentleman. He remained over night, and next morning actually accompanied Burr some distance as guide.

We have all heard of Marshal Ney, the French general — how he was sent to capture Napoleon returning from Elba; and how the wonderful magnetism of his old commander fascinated, won, captured him. He went to arrest the fallen Emperor; he came back his friend and ally.

Similarly did Colonel Aaron Burr captivate the sheriff of Washington County, Alabama.

Perkins waited for several hours with the horses. Suspecting at last that his friend had fallen a prey to the blandishments of Burr, he returned home. But Perkins was not to be thwarted so easily. He immediately went to Fort Stoddard and apprised Captain Gaines, and in less than twenty-four hours Burr was a prisoner in the fort. After being detained here for three weeks, the distinguished prisoner was taken northward for trial.

The distance was near a thousand miles,

about half of which was a dense forest. The guard consisted of nine mounted men, commanded by the plucky Perkins, who, remembering his experience with the sheriff, took his men aside and made them promise to steel their souls against the winning arts of the prisoner. The long, fatiguing march began, the party usually spending the nights in the open air. They spent one night at a small tavern in northern Georgia. The landlord, not knowing the character of his guests, began to converse on the subject that absorbed the attention in every part of the Union. "Had they heard anything of Aaron Burr the traitor? was he captured? was he not a very bad man?" Burr, who was sitting in the corner, raised his head, and, fixing his blazing eyes on the landlord, said, "I am Aaron Burr — what do you want with me?"

The journey was very monotonous, but for one thrilling incident. As they were passing through Chester, South Carolina, where Burr knew that he was popular, he suddenly leaped from his horse, and, appealing to the people along the streets, shouted in a loud voice: —

"I am Aaron Burr under military arrest, and claim the protection of the civil authorities."

The next instant Perkins stood before him with two drawn pistols and ordered him to remount.

Burr answered defiantly, "*I will not.*"

Perkins was unwilling to shed blood. He was a powerful man. He threw his pistols to the ground, seized his prisoner, and hurled him into the saddle. Before the spectators had recovered from their astonishment the party had left the village behind.[1] Aaron Burr was a man of wonderful nerve, but for once he lost his self-control; he was unmanned; he wept like a child. It is said that in all his sufferings, and they were great, this strange man did not again exhibit weakness.

The party was directed to Richmond, Virginia, where the trial was to take place. Here they arrived the 26th of March, 1807. It would make our chapter too long were we to give a history of this trial. Let a few general statements suffice.

The trial of this ex-Vice-President for treason

[1] Parton, Vol. II. p. 101.

is the most famous trial in all American history save one — that of Andrew Johnson. It was presided over by John Marshal, the Chief-Justice of the Supreme Court, and the greatest jurist this country has produced. Both sides enjoyed counsel of the greatest ability; the most noted on Burr's side was Luther Martin of Baltimore, a framer of the Constitution; the ablest on the opposite side was William Wirt, afterward for twelve years Attorney-General of the United States, and the Anti-Mason candidate for President in 1832.

The trial was long and exciting, the jury finally acquitting the prisoner for want of evidence, to the great disappointment of President Jefferson. Burr was guilty beyond a doubt; but the Constitution provides that treason "shall consist only in levying war against" the United States, or in "adhering to their enemies," and that "no person shall be convicted of treason unless on the testimony of two witnesses to the overt act." No such thing could be proved against Burr. He was a great lawyer, and he had covered his trail and managed his plot with such skill that the law

had no hold on him. He was therefore set at liberty. He and Blennerhassett were then indicted for misdemeanor, to be tried later in Ohio, but the trial never came off.

Theodosia

In the history of Aaron Burr there is one chapter that presents a charm of more than ordinary attraction — that which tells of the relation between him and his daughter. Theodosia was a queenly woman, of high mental gifts, and beyond all doubt of the purest and noblest type. She believed her father the most perfect of men, and never in her life seemed to doubt that his motives were the best.

When she heard of her father's arrest, she was overcome with sorrow. She hastened to Richmond, and remained during the trial. Every one had heard of Theodosia, and every one was charmed who came within her influence. She followed the trial with the keenness of a trained lawyer. When the acquittal was announced, her joy was unbounded. Little did she know that her grief had just begun — that one burden of sorrow would bear down

upon another until the weight would be greater than she could endure.

Burr was acquitted by the jury, but not by the American people; he was detested as a traitor on every side. He went to Baltimore and spent several days with a friend, when it was discovered that a mob was forming to do him injury, but he escaped from the city by night. He spent the following winter in hiding in various places, hoping that popular clamor would subside, but it did not. In June, 1808, he escaped from New York under an assumed name and took ship for England. After spending several months in England, he was banished from that country as a dangerous person. He next went to Sweden, then to Germany, and finally to Paris. The French Government was suspicious of him, kept him under surveillance, and refused him his passports when he desired to leave the country. He found no rest wherever he went. Often he found himself penniless and wholly without means of support. His dishonor had followed him from land to land, and he had nowhere to lay his head to rest.

But Aaron Burr had one friend whose fidelity never faltered. It was Theodosia. Her letters to him breathe a spirit of tenderness and devotion that is at once pathetic and beautiful. The greater his persecution, as she believed it to be, the greater her adoration. Here is an extract from one of her letters written him while in Sweden.

"I witness your extraordinary fortitude with new wonder at every new misfortune. Often you appear to me so superior, so elevated above all other men; I contemplate you with such strange mixture of humility, admiration, reverence, love, and pride that very little superstition would be necessary to make me worship you as a superior being. When I afterward revert to myself, how insignificant do my best qualities appear. My vanity would be greater, if I had not been placed so near you, and yet my pride is our relationship."

Such devotion from such a woman would buoy up the spirits of any man. Burr often said that his only object in life was to serve his daughter and her little boy. The constancy of this daughter, whose honesty and

sincerity cannot be questioned, means something — it means that Burr's heart was not all bad. It is true, she saw only the good, but there was good there, or he could never have been to her what he was. He seldom told her of his indigent condition, for he was aware that Jefferson's embargo had rendered the cotton crop unsalable, and that her husband, with all his estates, was often hard pressed for money.

Burr found no rest in Europe, and he at last decided to return to his own land, be the consequence what it may. He had been absent four years, and, after seeking his passports from France for more than a year, he at length received them, and embarked for America under an assumed name, reaching Boston in the spring of 1812. He made his way to New York, but his presence excited little interest, as war with England was about to be waged and this absorbed public attention.

On reaching America, the returned wanderer performed the one delightful task in which he had always been so faithful — writing to his daughter. Six weeks passed when he

received an answer. The news it bore was sad indeed. The letter was a wail of grief. Theodosia had lost her little boy, her only child. The boy had shown signs of unusual talent, and he was the hope and pride of his parents and his grandfather. Their dreams of his future greatness thus vanished by his early death, and his mother was inconsolable. Her father wrote frequently, offering her every consolation in his power, but she would not be comforted. Burr himself had doted on his promising grandchild, and ceased to mourn his loss only at the end of his life. The mention of the subject would start the tear, but this man of iron would fold his arms tightly over his breast, as if, by mere physical strength, he would repress the tide of emotion.[1]

But the bitterest sorrow of all was yet to come to Aaron Burr.

Theodosia's grief for her lost boy did not abate, and her health began to fail. It was decided that she leave her Southern home and fly to her father. Her husband would have accompanied her, but being now governor of

[1] Parton, Vol. II. p. 247.

South Carolina, he could not leave his official duties. She embarked at Charleston in a small schooner late in December, 1812, occupying the best cabin with her maid and her physician. Fond were the good-bys to her loving husband as the vessel sailed away; fond were her anticipations of soon embracing a father whose devotion to her had been as constant as the northern star.

The vessel was lost upon the ocean. It was never seen nor heard of again, and not a life was saved!

The agonized suspense of Burr can only be imagined. The eager letters exchanged between him and his son-in-law, the longing for news of the lost one, the hope, the despair, and at last the settled conviction that he was alone now, that he would see his daughter's face no more, furnish the most pathetic chapter in the strange history of Aaron Burr.

He said to a friend that when he realized the truth of his daughter's death, the world became to him a blank, and life lost all its value. To her bereaved husband he wrote that he felt himself severed from the human

race. Governor Alston survived his wife but a few years, but the stormy career of Burr was yet to continue for nearly a quarter of a century.

Later Life of Aaron Burr

Very briefly let us notice the last chapter in this strange drama. Of the conspicuous names in the annals of America, next to that of Benedict Arnold, the name of Aaron Burr is the most odious. It is certain that he did not deserve the love of his countrymen, but it is equally certain that he has been unduly hated. There is a tendency in human nature to join in the hue and cry of the unthinking crowd, and our subject was a victim of that tendency.

He had come back to New York by stealth, in the fear that his creditors would prosecute and imprison him, or that the old indictments against him would be pushed. Finding, however, that he was not likely to be molested, he quietly began to practise his profession. He was a great lawyer, and, it is said, never lost a case in his life, though he was very

careful not to undertake a bad cause. In a short time he was earning a good income, and soon had many of his debts paid off. But he never won the favor of the public; in fact, he lost ground in this direction to the end of his life. It became the popular thing to cut him in society, and to circulate in the newspapers malicious and wholly false statements concerning him. These he never noticed, nor did he ever attempt to set himself right with the public. His old age was similar to that of other men, except that he was alone; but he became hardened to his lonely life, and lost his interest in public opinion. That he was a man of the grossest habits and desires was often stated, but there is little foundation for such statements.

Aaron Burr was a very kind-hearted man, and his love for children, especially after the death of his grandson, was almost a passion. He was exceedingly kind to the poor, and many a time he gave away his last dollar. Old soldiers of the Revolution and their descendants, and those who had lost money in his hapless expedition in the Mississippi Valley,

never applied to him for aid without receiving it, if in his power to help them. He often had several boys and girls attending school at his expense.

Once, when driving through the country, he saw a rude crayon drawing on the side of a stable which showed some signs of genius. Learning that a little ragged boy had made it, he took the boy to the city, educated him, sent him to Europe, and had the gratification to see him become a famous artist.

Perhaps the most remarkable trait in this remarkable man was his wonderful self-poise. He was truly a philosopher. Whatever the public thought of him, it did not change his opinion of himself; however the people denounced him, he never for a moment lost his self-esteem. He never weakened, never complained, never exhibited resentment nor bitterness. He never repented having killed Hamilton, always claiming that the latter had treated him shamefully, and deserved his fate.

The one great sorrow of his later life, the death of Theodosia and her little boy, rent his heart, and left a wound that could not

heal. But all his other misfortunes, great as they were, never seemed seriously to disturb his mind. We learn by his diary and by the testimony of others that he was always the same — jovial, full of flashing wit, self-confident, and unconquerable. One of the boys whom he had educated was asked in later life what effect Burr's character had had upon his own.

"He made me iron," was the emphatic reply.

Burr's religious views are scarcely known. He often said that the Bible was the greatest and best of books, but would not express himself further. During the last two years of his life he was a hopeless paralytic. A clergyman frequently visited him and prayed with him. Burr was very reverent, and always thanked the clergyman for his services, but would not disclose his own belief. He died in 1836, in his eighty-first year, and was buried by the side of his fathers at Princeton, New Jersey.

CHAPTER VIII

The Missouri Compromise

One of the most momentous legislative acts in the history of America is that known as the Missouri Compromise. From this point, it may be said, the great agitation between the North and the South on the slavery question took its rise; thenceforth it continued to be the dominant public question for more than forty years, culminating at last in the great Civil War.

This volume is not intended to be a history of our national legislation; its aim is to present with some detail a few of the strategic points, the pivots on which the ponderous machinery of our history has turned.[1] With this end in view, the ordinary doings of Congress are omitted; but here and there we find an act of the National Legislature of such importance that to omit it would be to do injustice to the

[1] See Preface.

object of the book. Among these must be classed the Missouri Compromise. This was purely a slavery question; it is fitting, therefore, to give, as an introduction, a brief account of slavery in America up to that time.

Slavery during the Colonial Period

The enslavement of man by his fellow-man was almost universal among ancient peoples. The system in most countries gradually merged into the serfdom of the Middle Ages, and eventually disappeared, after being greatly ameliorated by the influence of Christianity. In ancient times slavery was usually the result of conquest in war. The enslavement of the African race on commercial grounds had its beginning in comparatively modern times.

Slavery in the English colonies of North America dates back to within twelve years of the founding of the first colony, Virginia; but it had existed in Central America and in South America for more than a century before that, and in southern Europe for about fifty years before the discovery of the New World by Columbus. Not long after the introduction of

slavery into the colonies, the traffic in slaves became quite profitable, and was chiefly carried on by English traders. England was responsible, above all other countries, for slavery in the United States. At different times the colonies attempted to suppress the slave-trade, but the British government thwarted them at every turn — simply because it was a profitable means of commerce.

As early as 1712 Pennsylvania passed an act to restrict the increase of slaves, but it was annulled by the Crown.[1] Fourteen years later Virginia attempted to check the trade by laying a tax on imported negroes, but the colony was soon forced to repeal the law. South Carolina attempted to restrict the trade in 1761, and Massachusetts made a similar attempt ten years later. In each case the effort was summarily crushed by the British Crown. The traffic was a source of much profit to England, and she would listen to no promptings of humanity in the matter. There had been founded in England, more than a century before the Revolution, the Royal

[1] Wilson's "Rise and Fall of the Slave Power," Vol. I. p. 4.

African Company, a great monopoly, which furnished slaves for all the British colonies throughout the world. Queen Anne owned one-fourth of the stock in this company during her reign, and she especially enjoined Parliament to suffer no interference with the slave-trade.

Thus England, while not permitting slavery on her home soil, not only encouraged, but enforced it, in her colonies. But the mother country was not alone to blame for the increase of the traffic in North America. The colonists purchased the slaves; if they had not, the traffic would have died out. Virginians made the first settlement in North Carolina, and took their slaves with them. Sir John Yeamans introduced them into South Carolina from the Barbadoes, and from South Carolina they were carried into Georgia.

The Society of Friends, or Quakers, took the lead in opposing slavery, beginning about 1688. The Pennsylvania Germans also entered their protest against the evil at an early date. John Wesley called slavery the sum of all villanies. At the time of the

Revolution all the colonies but one, Massachusetts, had slaves. The Continental Congress of 1774 pronounced against the slave-trade. This was repeated two years later, only three months before the Declaration of Independence. The people were so jubilant over their own prospects of freedom that they were disposed to extend the blessings of liberty to their slaves; but this feeling was temporary with many, and subsided after the war was over. Jefferson in writing the Declaration of Independence put in a clause condemning the slave-trade, but South Carolina and Georgia demanded that it be struck out, and it was done. But they could not prevent that grand sentiment in the Declaration: "All men are created equal" not equal in mental gifts nor in worldly station, but equal in their right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. If the colonists had followed out that noble principle, it would have freed every slave in America; and indeed it did furnish a powerful weapon in the hands of the opponents of slavery down to its overthrow in the sixties.

Soon after the Revolution the northern

States took hold of the matter and began to emancipate, Pennsylvania leading in 1780. Virginia came very near it two years before. New Hampshire became a free state in 1784, New York in 1799, and so on until all the northern States had abolished slavery. New Jersey had a few left as late as 1840.

In 1787 an ordinance was framed for governing the territory northwest of the Ohio River, afterward Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Michigan. In this document, known as "The Ordinance of 1787," slavery was forever prohibited in that territory. Had it not been for this provision Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois would no doubt have become slave States, as they were largely settled by emigrants from Virginia and Kentucky.[1] Even then efforts were made by Governor William Henry Harrison and others to break down that ordinance and to make Indiana and Illinois slave States; but they were not successful.

In 1784 Jefferson introduced in the old Congress a similar ordinance to prohibit slavery in the new States west of the Ohio, afterward

[1] Adams, "Rise and Fall of the Slave Power," Vol. I. p. 163.

Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi, etc. Had this motion carried and been effective, how great would have been the results; slavery would have been confined to the few Atlantic States in the South, and would no doubt have died a natural death. This would have prevented the seventy years of slavery agitation and the great Civil War. But the measure was lost by one vote.[1] A member from New Jersey who would have voted for it was absent, and for want of his vote the measure was lost. Thus the entire course of our history was changed by the absence of one man from Congress on a certain day in 1784!

Here let me say a word about the slave-trade, especially the smuggling trade. This was certainly one of the most nefarious pieces of business ever carried on. A vessel would go to the African coast and secure a cargo of negroes. These were packed in the ship almost like sardines in a box, and so inhuman was the treatment that sometimes thirty per cent of them died before reaching America. A smuggling vessel, pursued, would sometimes

[1] Greeley's "American Conflict," Vol. I. p. 163.

throw its entire cargo of negroes overboard! This occurred on various occasions. But when a smuggling ship was caught, it seldom brought relief to the poor blacks, as the laws were persistently against them, and often a whole cargo of negroes was sold to pay the cost of investigation. There was always a way found to enslave the black man; sending him back to his home in Africa, or giving him his freedom in this country was almost unheard of. A committee of Congress recommended that a free colored man on trial and proving himself free, must pay the cost of the trial, and if unable to do so must be sold into slavery to defray the expenses! But fortunately this did not become a law.

Slavery under the Constitution

A majority of the makers of the Constitution would gladly have seen slavery abolished in all parts of the country where it still existed; but this was not possible, for some of the southern States had come to believe that slavery was necessary to their prosperity. It was plain that no Union could be formed if the Constitution

were so framed as to interfere with the right to hold property in slaves. Not only did the Constitution recognize the right of property in slaves; it forbade Congress to prohibit the foreign slave-trade before the year 1808.[1] This prohibition is part of one of the compromises of that instrument.

In 1806 President Jefferson congratulated Congress on the near approach of the time when the traffic could be shut off. Accordingly when the time came Congress prohibited the African trade under stringent laws. It is fair to the South to say here that the southern States had prohibited the trade, each in its own borders, long before. South Carolina, however, had reopened it in 1803, and in the five remaining years imported forty thousand negroes.

The people in the North and many in the South now fondly believed that this National prohibition of 1808 had severed the artery of slavery itself, and that the whole system would disappear in time in the South as it had in the North. They were therefore lulled to quiet on the subject, and there was little slavery

[1] See Chapter II.

agitation for ten years. But their hope was a delusion. The cotton-gin, which rendered the laborious work of separating the cotton fibre from the seed rapid and easy, made the raising of cotton the greatest industry in America, and slave-labor was thought to be essential to its continuance. More slaves were needed, but they could not be had from Africa except by smuggling. The new cotton States opening up along the Mississippi were greatly in need of more slaves, while Virginia had too many. Hence the interstate slave-trade was established.

The Louisiana Purchase added a vast territory beyond the Mississippi to our public domain. Soon after the War of 1812, this territory began to be settled, and the great question now arose — slavery or no slavery in the Great West? Missouri being the first of the trans-Mississippi Territories to apply for statehood, became the battle-ground, and upon the Missouri question the slavery question for the West was fought out. But the slaveholders stole a march by settling the Missouri Territory and taking their slaves with them. When the petition, therefore, came to

the Fifteenth Congress that Missouri be admitted into the Union, it was as a slave State.

It was believed that there would be little objection, but the majority of the people of the North were becoming alarmed at the powerful hold with which slavery was fastening itself upon the country. It was clearly seen that slavery admitted into Missouri without protest meant slavery in the whole Louisiana Purchase. It must be opposed. Who will lead the opposition?

There was a young man in Congress from New York named James Talmadge. This was his first and only term in Congress. He it was that rose and moved to strike out the slavery clause from the Missouri bill. He was a youth of burning eloquence, and in the speech with which he supported his motion he electrified the House and the nation.[1] Old men were reminded of the marvellous eloquence of Fisher Ames in 1796. Talmadge was not alone; he had a powerful fellow-worker in John W. Taylor, also of New York, and afterward speaker of the House. The whole South was instantly

[1] Schouler's "History of the United States," Vol. III. p. 134.

arrayed on the opposite side. During this debate, a slave-driver with a gang of negroes passed the open windows of the Capitol, and the clank of chains, the crack of the whip, and the oaths of the driver gave great effect to the speeches in favor of freedom. These two, Talmadge and Taylor, piloted the amendment through the House, but it was defeated in the Senate and left over to the next Congress.

The question was thus thrown open to the public; but the people were not in a position to act at an advantage, as the election of the new Congress had already taken place. Nevertheless they made themselves heard. The people of the North had grown listless on the slavery subject in the belief that the status of the institution was settled, and that no attempt would be made to increase the number of slave States. But the Missouri question roused them from their lethargy. Great meetings were held in the cities, towns, villages, everywhere. Resolutions were passed branding slavery as a moral and political evil, avowing that it should encroach no farther on free soil, and calling on Congress to prohibit it in Missouri. State legislatures

passed similar resolutions; and the subject was discussed in public speeches, sermons, pamphlets, and newspapers on all sides.

From south of Mason and Dixon's line we hear a different voice. The people of the South took the other side of the question, and spoke with a decision equal to that of the North. They said that Congress had no right to prohibit slavery in any State, that Missouri would not stand on equal footing with the other States if not allowed to manage her own affairs. They argued further that if slavery was an evil, why not thin it out by spreading it over more territory?

The two sections, the North and the South, had thus begun to array themselves on opposite sides. It is true the beginnings of their differences date back to Revolutionary times, but they assumed serious proportions only with the rise of the Missouri question; yet none could foretell that this was but the preliminary skirmish of a long and dreadful conflict that must eventually drench the land in blood.

The Sixteenth Congress

The Sixteenth Congress stands out as a landmark in our history on account of its one great measure — the Missouri Compromise. The first session of this Congress began in December, 1819, and the great question at once came up for a final solution. The preceding Congress had grappled with the subject, as we have noticed, but the two Houses had failed to agree, and the new Congress was also divided. Talmadge was not now a member, and Taylor became the champion for free Missouri. The debates, covering several months, were very able in both House and Senate. With much ability Taylor piloted through the House a motion to prohibit slavery in Missouri. The leaders of the other side were Henry Clay, the speaker, Charles Pinckney, a framer of the Constitution, John Tyler, a future President, and William Lowndes, one of the most brilliant men of the South.

Again was the Missouri Bill sent to the Senate, with the clause admitting slavery struck out. Here the debates even surpassed those

of the House. The leader on the slave side was William Pinkney of Maryland, said to have been the greatest lawyer in America — a distinction afterward held by Daniel Webster. Pinkney's speech on the subject was one of the greatest ever made in the Senate. It was answered by Rufus King of New York, the venerable statesman whose public career dated back to the Revolution.

Now the Senate was balanced and had been from the beginning of the Government, half from slave States and half from free States; but there were a few "Northern men with Southern principles," as they were called, who were ever ready to help the slaveholders. At this time there were three, one from Indiana and the two from Illinois, who could be counted on to aid the South when needed. When the bill, therefore, to admit Missouri passed the Senate, the amendment to prohibit slavery was again struck out; and the House again voted to disagree. Thus the two Houses had reached a deadlock, and it seemed that nothing could be done.

It happened at this time that Maine was

also seeking admission to the Union. The territory of Maine had belonged to Massachusetts from colonial times. After many fruitless efforts to obtain a separation from Massachusetts, the latter had at last given her consent, on the condition, however, that Maine be admitted to the Union before the fourth of March, 1820.[1] The time limit was drawing near, and the people of Maine were clamoring for admission; but the Missouri question was still unsettled, and this was absorbing the whole attention.

The Senate now adopted a new plan; it united the Missouri and Maine bills into one. It is a principle in our National legislation that a bill, however incongruous its parts, cannot be separated by one House of Congress after it leaves the other. Thus the House could not admit Maine into the Union without admitting Missouri also, with slavery. Before this twofold measure left the Senate, however, Senator Thomas of Illinois, who had steadily voted with the South, moved that slavery be henceforth prohibited in the Louisi-

[1] MacMaster, Vol. IV. p. 581.

ana Purchase north of thirty-six degrees and thirty minutes north latitude — except, of course, in Missouri, which lies north of that line. This was the famous Missouri Compromise. It was thrown as a bait to the North in the hope that the House would thus be led to pass the measure and admit Missouri with slavery.

Late in February this Maine-Missouri bill was sent to the House; but that body refused to consider it. The Senate then asked for a conference, and a joint committee of the two Houses was appointed. Speaker Clay was careful to appoint men from the House who favored slavery in Missouri; and this committee soon agreed to report the measure as it had passed the Senate, including the thirty-six-thirty amendment of Senator Thomas.

The Lower House had been gradually weakening, but it was still hard to yield. It did so, however, and the bill was passed, signed by President Monroe, and became law on March 3, 1820. The members from the North who voted for the bill were called "Doughfaces" by John Randolph, and this

term was used for many years thereafter to designate a "Northern man with Southern principles."

Missouri, however, was not finally admitted to the Union at this time, owing to the fact that her people in framing a constitution forbade free negroes on her soil, and also forbade any future legislature to pass any law emancipating slaves without the consent of the owners. To this Congress refused to agree, the old strife was renewed and kept up for another year, when the State was at last admitted on the condition that the obnoxious features be expunged from her constitution.

The Missouri Compromise was a victory for the South. The North had grown weary of the long strife that promised no victory, and had yielded, partly because of the difficulty that would have been involved in removing the slaves already in Missouri. This compromise has often been called Clay's Compromise; but there is no warrant for this, and Clay himself often wondered why he should be considered its author. It is true Clay favored settling the matter in this way, and he appointed the House

committee that made the report; but he was not more instrumental than some others in bringing about the final result. The Missouri Compromise was born with great tribulation; but it brought peace to the land on the slavery subject for several years. It remained unbroken for thirty-four years, when it was repealed by the Kansas-Nebraska Bill of Stephen A. Douglas. This will be treated in a later chapter.

CHAPTER IX

The Monroe Doctrine

James Monroe was President of the United States from 1817 to 1825. He has been called the last and least of the great Virginians. His administration is remembered in our history as the "era of good feeling," as, in a century of political storm, the one period of calm in which party lines were obliterated. Monroe also holds the distinction of having been the only President except Washington whose election was practically unanimous.[1]

As a statesman, President Monroe must be ranked below all his predecessors and many of

[1] In the election of 1816 Monroe received one hundred and eighty-three electoral votes to thirty-four for Rufus King. In 1820 all the electors voted for Monroe save one, a Mr. Plumer of New Hampshire, who voted for John Quincy Adams on the ground, as he said, that Washington alone should bear the honor of a unanimous election.

his successors in the presidential office; yet it is true that his name is known more familiarly to-day in foreign countries than that of any other of our early Presidents except the name of Washington. This is because of the fact that his name is inseparably linked with the famous principle in our foreign policy known as the Monroe Doctrine.

How this Doctrine Originated

The Monroe Doctrine has its root in Washington's Farewell Address of a quarter of a century before the declaration by Monroe; and indeed the germs of it may be found in his Proclamation of Neutrality of a still earlier date. In the Farewell Address, Washington urged that America stand aloof from the political broils of Europe. A few years later, Jefferson, in his first inaugural address, warned against "entangling alliances" with foreign nations. This attitude of non-interference in matters wholly European expanded until it included a determination to oppose all European interference in affairs wholly American. This doctrine had become a settled policy in

the public mind, and needed only an occasion to call forth a declaration of it from the highest authority. This occasion arose in 1823, when, in his annual message to Congress (December 2), President Monroe gave utterance to the "doctrine" that has since been called by his name.

It is generally asserted that the "Holy Alliance" was formed in Europe for the purpose of assisting Spain to reduce her rebellious South American colonies to submission; but the fact is, this alliance was simply a joint resolution of the sovereigns of Russia, Austria, and Prussia to rule their respective countries in strict accordance with the principles of the Christian religion. It was an outburst of religious enthusiasm occasioned by the fall of Napoleon at Waterloo, and there is no proof that any ulterior motives entered into the agreement.[1]

It was these same three powers, however, that met in conference at Verona in October, 1822, to consider plans to put down an insurrection in Spain and to aid that country in

[1] See MacMaster's "With the Fathers," p. 2.

reducing the South American Republics. They had met two years before for the purpose of crushing out the spirit of freedom in Naples, and an Austrian army had succeeded in doing this. Now they turned their attention to Spain. England was represented at this Verona conference, and she entered her earnest protest against any interference in South America. Two reasons may be given for this stand taken by England — first, she was beyond a doubt farther advanced in her ideas of liberty and of human rights than were the continental countries, and second, she had important commercial interests with the South American Republics which she desired should not be disturbed.

The power of Spain had been greatly reduced by Napoleon I., and she was no longer able to govern her colonies. These colonies in the Western World, except Cuba, had revolted against the mother country, and after a revolutionary war of more than ten years were in 1822 recognized as independent republics by our own country. Before the close of that year the Verona Congress met, and the

three monarchs who had entered into the Holy Alliance, ever vigilant to uphold absolutism as against natural human rights and liberties, proposed to aid Spain in subjugating her western possessions.

In August, 1823, Mr. Canning, the English minister of foreign affairs, proposed to Mr. Richard Rush, our minister at the Court of St. James, that Great Britain and the United States issue a joint declaration in opposition to the designs of the allied powers. Mr. Rush fully agreed with Canning that something should be done to save the new republics from reënslavement, but he had no instructions to act. He wrote a full account of the whole matter to President Monroe, who, after careful deliberation, and after asking the opinions and receiving the written approval of both Jefferson and Madison, decided to embody the general public sentiment on the subject in his message to Congress, which was soon to meet. In his annual message, therefore, we find these words:—

"In the wars of the European Powers in matters relating to themselves we have never

taken any part, nor does it comport with our policy to do so. . . . We owe it, therefore, to candor, and to the amicable relations existing between the United States and those Powers, to declare that *we should consider any attempt on their part to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere as dangerous to our peace and safety*. With the existing colonies or dependencies of any European Power we have not interfered and shall not interfere; but with the Governments who have declared their independence and maintained it, and whose independence we have acknowledged, we could not view any interposition for the purpose of oppressing them, or controlling in any other manner their destiny, by any European Power, in any other light than as the manifestation of an unfriendly disposition toward the United States."

This is the famous Monroe Doctrine. Its secondary immediate object was to stop the colonizing of the Pacific coast by Russia, which had been going on for some time. John Quincy Adams had expressed the same thought in very similar language, some time

before, in a letter to Mr. Rush; and it is generally believed that Adams wrote this part of Monroe's message. But be that as it may, the "doctrine" took the name of Monroe, and so it will ever be known in history.

When this message was promulgated, the English people rejoiced; but their joy was mild compared with that in South America. No more was heard of the unholy alliance in Europe. From that day to the present the free republics of South and Central America have basked in the favor, and lived under the protection from foreign conquest, of the Great Republic of the North; and but for that protection most or all of them would no doubt ere this have been reduced to the vassalage of some European Power.

The Monroe Doctrine in Operation

Since the declaration of President Monroe in 1823, there have been many occasions on which this American policy has been called into service, a few of which we shall briefly notice.

The earliest opportunity for an international discussion of the Monroe Doctrine was offered

through the Panama Congress, which met in 1826. This congress was arranged by Mexico and the countries of South America, and one of its objects was to form an alliance to carry the new doctrine into effect when any occasion might arise. The United States was warmly invited to join with them. John Quincy Adams, who was then President, and Henry Clay, his secretary of state, agreed that our Government should be represented, and Mr. Adams sent a message to the Senate, urging that ministers be appointed for the purpose. But there was much opposition to this in the Senate, not because the members disapproved of the Monroe Doctrine, but rather because Mr. Adams was not popular in that body; and besides, the Panama Congress proposed to discuss some things (such as the recognition of the negro republic of Hayti and the suppression of the slave-trade) which would be offensive to the southern States. The Senate, therefore, disputed about the matter so long that when two ministers were finally appointed, it was so late that on reaching Panama they found that the Congress had adjourned.

Nearly twenty years later the Monroe Doctrine was prominently called into service in settling the Oregon boundary. In 1845 President Polk, in his message to Congress concerning this disputed boundary, made reference to the doctrine in these words: "In the existing circumstances . . . the present is deemed a proper occasion to reiterate and reaffirm the principle avowed by Mr. Monroe, and to state my cordial concurrence in its wisdom and sound policy."

Three years later another occasion of very different character arose. The peninsula of Yucatan had been greatly disturbed by a war between the white people and the Indians. The white population at length appealed to England, Spain, and the United States for protection, and offered "the dominion and sovereignty" of the peninsula to any one of the three that would grant the necessary aid. President Polk, without waiting the action of either of the European nations, made a direct application of the Monroe Doctrine, quoting Mr. Monroe's exact words. This was certainly applying the doctrine in the broadest possible sense. No European nation was making an

effort to colonize or extend its political system in the New World. On the other hand, an oppressed people, struggling for existence, had called on two of them for help.[1] Yet Polk made a direct application of the declaration of President Monroe. It is notable that in the debate in the Senate which followed, John C. Calhoun, the only surviving member of Monroe's cabinet, took strong ground against the general application of the Monroe Doctrine. Before any action was taken the people of Yucatan settled their troubles, and the whole matter came to an end.

To trace the application of the Monroe Doctrine in its bearing on the proposed canal across the Isthmus of Panama or Nicaragua, would require far more space than can be given it here. We can only make a few general statements. As early as 1846 the United States Government made a treaty with New Granada (now the United States of Colombia), in which the latter granted the United States the right of way across the Isthmus of Panama. Three years later the republic of Nicaragua granted

[1] MacMaster's "With the Fathers," p. 32.

us a similar right to construct a canal across that country. Another treaty soon followed, that known as the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty, arranged in April, 1850, by Mr. Clayton, secretary of state under President Taylor, and Sir Henry Bulwer, representing Great Britain. The Clayton-Bulwer treaty was brought about by the English claims to the Mosquito Coast of Nicaragua. It provided that neither government "will ever obtain or maintain for itself any exclusive control over the proposed ship canal" across Nicaragua, nor colonize nor exercise dominion over any part of Central America. Soon after the treaty was ratified, a dispute arose over its provisions, and this delayed for several years any commencement of the great project. Then came the American Civil War and its train of difficulties, and nearly twenty years more elapsed before anything was done.

In 1879 Ferdinand de Lesseps of France organized a company for the construction of a canal across Panama; but this called forth a declaration from our Congress of the Monroe Doctrine. This was repeated in substance by President Garfield, in his inaugural address,

and soon after by Mr. Blaine, his secretary of state.

Before the close of the year 1881 the Clayton-Bulwer treaty was again under discussion; and Mr. Blaine plainly informed the British Government that this country could no longer be bound by the provisions of that treaty, because the conditions that called it forth were temporary in their nature, and because the development of the Pacific coast had vastly increased the interest of the United States, and greatly changed the relative interest between this country and Great Britain.

Without pursuing this subject further, let it suffice to state that President McKinley, in 1897, appointed a Nicaragua Canal Commission to survey a route across Nicaragua by way of the San Juan River, beginning at Greytown. This commission, with a company of engineers and surveyors, began its work in December of the same year.

A ship canal across the isthmus at Panama or through Nicaragua is a certainty for the future. It will cost many millions of dollars and a vast amount of labor, but the great

advantage it would be to commerce would repay all the cost. The present settled conviction of the American people is that any such canal between the two Americas should be and must be controlled by the United States; and this conviction is an outgrowth of the general acceptance of the Monroe Doctrine.

Cuba and Mexico

Cuba, the "Gem of the Antilles," is an island of exceedingly fertile soil, and is about the size of the State of Tennessee. When the other Spanish-American colonies rebelled against the mother country and won their independence, Cuba remained faithful, and has ever since been considered the most valuable colonial possession of Spain. But Spain has been wofully deficient in her government of the island, and its history for many years has been the history of disorder and rebellion.

Within two years after the first promulgation of the Monroe Doctrine it was applied in the case of Cuba. In 1825 a French fleet appeared among the West India Islands, and it was believed that France had designs on

Cuba; whereupon Henry Clay, the secretary of state, immediately wrote our minister at Paris that, while the United States was not disposed to interfere with the Spanish possession of the island, under no consideration could we permit any other nation to gain control of it. The French government disavowed any intention of such an object, and practically concurred with Mr. Clay's views concerning the possession of the island.

President Polk in 1848 directed our minister at Madrid to ascertain if Spain would sell the island; but the reply received was that the people of Spain, rather than see the island transferred to any other nation, would prefer to see it sunk into the ocean.

In 1850 an adventurer named Narcisco Lopez fitted out an expedition in the United States for the purpose of attacking Cuba. He landed on the island, but was disappointed in his belief that the Cubans would join his standard and make an effort to wrest the island from Spanish dominion. Lopez was soon driven off, and the next year, when engaged in a similar expedition with a follow-

ing of about five hundred men, he was overpowered and captured with his entire force. Most of the leaders were put to death, Lopez himself being garroted in the public square of Havana. It was afterward found that Lopez had been abetted and furnished money by some of the leading men of the South, the object being to annex Cuba to this country for the purpose of increasing slave territory. This brought forth the proposal by England and France of a tripartite agreement that neither of those countries nor the United States should ever take possession of Cuba. But this was declined by the United States on the ground that Cuba lies right at our doors, commands the approach to the Gulf of Mexico, and that the United States in signing such an agreement would be sacrificing a great deal more than either of the other countries; and besides, such an agreement would be entering into a political alliance contrary to American practice.

Next followed a declaration known as the Ostend Manifesto. This was made by our three ministers[1] at London, Paris, and Madrid

[1] James Buchanan, John Y. Mason, and Pierre Soulé.

respectively. They met at Ostend, Belgium, and in the declaration put forth they stated that Cuba should by all means come into the possession of the United States. The ten years' war in Cuba, 1868 1878, and the later revolt against the mother country, beginning in February, 1895, and resulting in the intervention by the United States and our consequent war with Spain, do not come under a discussion of the Monroe Doctrine.

The political turmoil in Mexico during the present century has been greater even than that of Cuba, if such a thing is possible. The continual strife between the Liberal party and the Church party actually gave rise to thirty-six forms of government within thirty-three years![1] In 1860 three European countries, Great Britain, France, and Spain, decided on armed intervention in Mexico. President Buchanan in his last annual message protested against this, and recommended the employment of a military force to prevent it. But the Civil War broke out, and America had enough to engage its full attention for several

[1] Tucker's "Monroe Doctrine," p. 92.

years. Meantime the three powers proceeded to land an army in Mexico; but first they signed an agreement not to acquire any territory for themselves, nor to dictate any form of government for Mexico; their only object, they said, was to enforce payment of their just claims upon that country. Scarcely, however, had the armies landed when it was discovered that the object of Napoleon III., Emperor of France, was, in violation of the agreement, to establish an empire in Mexico and to seat the Austrian Prince Maximilian on the throne. England and Spain instantly withdrew, and France was left to make the conquest alone. As this progressed Europe rejoiced at what was supposed to be the downfall of the Monroe Doctrine. The English Government, which had now come to hate that doctrine, joined in the rejoicing. Napoleon was congratulated for doing a great service for the world. The *Westminster Review* said: "The occupation of Mexico is the extinction of the Monroe Doctrine. That doctrine, it must be owned, is both absurd and arrogant in theory and practice."

But they reckoned without their host. The American Civil War came to an end; and the United States Government had no thought of abandoning the principle laid down by Monroe. During the war Napoleon had sought to have his new empire recognized by this country, but Secretary Seward informed him in the name of President Lincoln that this country favored a republican form of government in Mexico, and that if France ignored that American sentiment, she would but prepare the way for a collision between that country and the United States. Still Napoleon refused to understand, and in the summer of 1865, soon after the surrender of Lee at Appomattox, the President sent General Sheridan to the banks of the Rio Grande with fifty thousand veteran troops. Thus for the first time the Monroe Doctrine was backed up with an army. This kind of argument was quite convincing to Napoleon, and the result was the French troops were all withdrawn within a year.

But the foolish Maximilian still clung to his newly acquired throne. He was now with-

not an army, without protection, and he had not won the hearts of his new subjects. The Mexicans soon rose against him, overpowered, and took him captive. He was condemned by a court-martial, and was shot to death in 1867. It is needless to say that since then no European power has attempted the conquest of Mexico.

Venezuela

The application a few years ago of the Monroe Doctrine to the Venezuelan boundary dispute is still fresh in the memory of all. Never before in our history had its application caused such a profound sensation throughout the world. Never before were the Powers of Europe so thoroughly, so suddenly, convinced that the old doctrine is a living thing, and that the determination of the American people is to stand by it at all hazards.

The boundary dispute between Venezuela and British Guiana had been pending for more than half a century. In 1840 a botanist and surveyor named Schomburgk, in the service of the British Government, made a survey

of the valley of the Essequibo River, and claimed the entire basin of the river for England. Against this Schomburgk line, as it was called, Venezuela made an earnest protest. A few years later Lord Aberdeen consented to a new boundary line less pretentious than the former; and in 1850 the two countries agreed not to occupy nor encroach upon the disputed territory. For many years after this agreement had been made the boundary dispute was left to slumber. In 1876 the subject was again brought up, and Venezuela offered to accept a compromise line; but the British Government now took the ground that the disputed territory belonged to that country alone "by virtue of ancient treaties with the native races." These "native races" are supposed to have been Indian tribes which had no right to make any such treaties; and further, England had not owned the colony previous to 1814, when it was received from Holland. How then could there be "ancient treaties" brought forth to settle the dispute? Venezuela now offered to accept the line offered by Lord Aberdeen in 1844, but Eng-

land claimed that so many British subjects had settled in the disputed territory that it was impossible to deprive them of the benefits of British rule. Great Britain betrayed the weakness of her claim by refusing Venezuela's offer to leave the whole matter to arbitration. All diplomatic relations were broken off between the two countries in 1887, and this was the state of affairs when in 1895 the United States decided to interfere.

Nothing was plainer than that the English Government, regarding Venezuela too weak to successfully resist, had decided to seize part of the latter's territory. This was a palpable infraction of the Monroe Doctrine. The territory in dispute comprised one hundred and nine thousand square miles — a tract larger than all the New England States combined. Thus matters stood when in 1895 Mr. Olney, secretary of state under Cleveland, wrote Lord Salisbury through our minister at London that the American Government was unwilling to stand by and see Venezuela despoiled of her territory, that in accordance with the Monroe Doctrine we must insist on arbitration. The

reply of Salisbury was a stunning one. He boldly asserted that he did not accept the Monroe Doctrine, that "no statesman, however eminent, and no nation, however powerful, are competent to insert so novel a principle into the code of international law."

This could not be misunderstood. A crisis was at hand, a supreme test of the Monroe Doctrine. America must back down and abandon its time-honored doctrine, its championship of republican government, of human rights, or make a defiant stand against the British Empire.

Would the two great Anglo-Saxon nations of the world go to war over so trifling a matter as a little boundary dispute in South America? How could the United States justify itself for the vast sacrifice of men and treasure that a war with so great a nation would occasion? And, further, the Venezuelans are scarcely capable of self-government, nor are we so nearly related to them as to the English. Why should we take any such stand in the matter?

The fact is there was a principle at stake Had we yielded in that crisis, we would have

thereby abandoned our time-honored Monroe Doctrine. The New World would have thus been reopened to European colonization, and no one could foretell what might have been the final result. It would probably have been the beginning of the end of popular self-government in Central and South America. Our people were almost unanimous in their determination to maintain our cherished doctrine at any cost, and our President was equal to the occasion.

It was on December 17, 1895, that President Cleveland startled the world with his famous message to Congress. In that message the President speaks thus of the Monroe Doctrine: "It was intended to apply to every stage of our national life, and cannot become obsolete while our Republic endures." This was investing the doctrine with a permanence by an authority equal to that which first proclaimed it. A European power was plainly trying to extend her system of government on this continent, and this Monroe had pronounced "dangerous to our peace and safety." Cleveland's message continues: "Having labored faithfully for many years to induce Great

Britain to submit this dispute to impartial arbitration, and having been now finally apprised of her refusal to do so, nothing remains but to accept the situation." The President then proposes that a commission be appointed to ascertain the rightful boundary between British Guiana and Venezuela, and to report the same to Congress. He then continues: "When such report is made and accepted, it will, in my opinion, be the duty of the United States to resist by every means in its power" the wilful aggression and appropriation of lands by Great Britain, which we have determined of right belong to Venezuela.

This message was unequivocal; none could mistake its meaning. England was startled at its suddenness, its positive tone, and still more at the unanimity of the support given it by the people. It was said in Europe that Great Britain had not received such a backsetting in a hundred years. Congress forgot its party differences and voted without debate and without division one hundred thousand dollars to defray the expenses of the commission to be appointed. But to the joy of all, the British

Government receded from its position, left the disputed boundary to arbitration, and all danger of hostilities soon passed away. It is safe to say that the Monroe Doctrine is now more deeply imbedded in the American heart than ever before, and there is little donbt that it will be a long time before any European power will again attempt to trample it under foot.

Remarks on the Monroe Doctrine

The Monroe Doctrine has a twofold object: first, it guards against that which may be "*dangerous to our peace and safety*," namely, European encroachment on American soil; and second, it *protects democratic government* in the Western Hemisphere. Both find a ready response in the liberty-loving hearts of the American people. What the Balance of Power is to the Old World the Monroe Doctrine is to the New. This doctrine is not a part of international law, nor has it even been placed upon the statutes in our own country. Three times was the attempt made to have Congress give it legal sanction. In 1824, Henry Clay sought to have Congress sanction what Monroe

had said the year before. Again in 1879, and still again in 1880, similar attempts were made; but in each case, for partisan or other reason, it failed of passage.

An act of Congress, however, would give little additional value to the doctrine. It is the business of Congress to carry out the policies of the people, not to shape them. President Monroe was not the author of the doctrine that bears his name; he simply voiced the sentiment of the people, and the people are supreme in this Government. The Monroe Doctrine is, therefore, not a law; it is a fact, it is a declaration of an attitude taken by this Government with reference to the relations of European Powers to the republics of this hemisphere.

The question is sometimes asked: What right have we to take such a stand in this matter? Surely as much right as Europe has to maintain the Balance of Power — as much right as the European nations had to interfere in the recent Græco-Turkish War. The Monroe Doctrine will stand as long as the American people have the power and the inclination to maintain it.

CHAPTER X

Lafayette's Visit

The visit of General Lafayette to the United States in 1824, nearly half a century after he had so generously aided the struggling colonies to win their freedom, was a memorable event, and has scarcely a parallel in history. During the darkest hours of the Revolution, when the patriot cause seemed waning, and only the most sanguine could discern the coming dawn, this young nobleman had left his home of luxury and royal favor to offer his life and his fortunes to the holy cause of liberty. The chief motive of the French Government in rendering assistance to America in that struggle was not the noblest of motives — it was largely a dislike of England. But this cannot be said of Lafayette. However he may have disliked England, his true motive in coming arose from his

inborn love of liberty. After suffering the hardships of colonial warfare for several years, commanding armies as a major-general, living in the closest intimacy with Washington, whom he loved as a father, and being present at last when Cornwallis surrendered his army, this doughty Frenchman, still in the ardor of youth, returned to his native land feeling that he had struck an effective blow in the cause of freedom. He soon became one of the most prominent national figures in his native land, and spent most of his long life in the turmoils of French politics. He was in the midst of the storm when the Revolution swept the French dynasty from the throne; five years he spent in an Austrian prison. He often said that he was not only a Frenchman, but also an American citizen. He has been called the man of two worlds, and he deserved above all men to be so called.

Vast changes had taken place in America since the close of the war for independence. The Republic was no longer an experiment; it had now taken its place among the great nations of the world. The tide of emigration

had swept over the Appalachian Mountains and taken possession of the Mississippi Valley; and beyond the Father of Waters, a territory of unknown bounds had been added to the public domain and awaited the coming of the pioneer. It was upon this new America that the eyes of the aged Lafayette rested when he made this final visit to the land which he had so loved in his youth. But he came not as a stranger to a land of strangers; he came as a friend, as a brother, to revisit a people whom, in his long absence, he had never ceased to love.

A Nation's Welcome

The joyful welcome, the universal homage, with which General Lafayette was received by the American people have never been equalled before nor since in our history. The few remaining soldiers of the Revolution, now tottering with age, gathered around him, and their eyes were bathed in tears as they beheld his benignant face and recalled the memories of the past. Men and women, youths and maidens, left their homes and hastened to the

cities which he visited to look upon the coun tenance of this hero of a past generation, and to join in the universal shout of welcome.

Lafayette had been cordially invited to visit our country, and he expected a warm welcome; but he had not counted on such an unreserved outburst of joyful acclamation from the whole people. He had expected to land quietly and engage private lodgings; but when he found that he was to be a public guest, that the people had made the most elaborate preparations to do him honor, he was overcome with emotion. His eyes flowed with tears, and, pressing both hands upon his heart, he exclaimed, "It will burst."[1]

Declining a public ship, he came as a passenger on the *Cadmus*, accompanied by his son, George Washington Lafayette, and by his private secretary. He landed at Staten Island in New York harbor on August 15, 1824, and repaired to the residence of Vice-President Tompkins, where he spent the night.[2] Next day a company of ships, gayly

[1] Schouler's "History of the United States," Vol. III. p. 320

[2] *Niles's Register*, August, 1824.

decked with flags and streamers, and bearing six thousand citizens, came to escort him to the city. His arrival was announced by the boom of cannon and by the wildest acclamations of joy that a grateful people could bestow. The most interesting occurrence was the meeting of Lafayette with his old companions in arms. The main ceremonies over, he sat down with Colonel Willet, a veteran, now in his eighty-fifth year, with whom he had spent many a day in camp and on the battle-field. The two venerable heroes talked over Revolutionary scenes, recalling many incidents that both remembered. In the evening Lafayette went outside his hotel and shook hands with about seven hundred boys and girls, who had gathered around hoping to get a glimpse of him.

After a few days of festivity in New York, the nation's guest proceeded to Boston, where he found the same enthusiastic spirit of welcome. He reached Boston on August the 24th, and was driven in an open barouche drawn by four white horses through the principal streets. The city was crowded with a vast

throng of people, and their shouts, mingled with the sound of the cannon and the ringing of bells, welcomed the hero of the hour. An arch across Washington Street was inscribed with the following stanza, written by Charles Sprague: —

"Our fathers in glory shall sleep
That gathered with thee to the fight;
But their sons will eternally keep
The tablet of gratitude bright.
We bow not the neck and we bow not the knee,
But our hearts, Lafayette, we surrender to thee." [1]

Next day Lafayette attended the commencement exercises at Harvard, where he occupied the seat of honor. Here it was that Edward Everett pronounced one of his matchless eulogies, and at its close "every one in the assembly was in tears." [2]

By the middle of September we find our national guest again in New York. In Castle Garden a magnificent banquet was given in his honor, and of the thousands present, every one wore a badge or likeness of Lafayette

[1] Quincy's "Figures of the Past," p. 104.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 107.

made for the occasion. Here are a few descriptive words from the *New York Evening Post*: "We hazard nothing in saying that it was the most magnificent *fête* given under cover in the world. It was a festival that realizes all that we read of in the Persian tales or 'Arabian Nights,' which dazzle the eye and bewilder the imagination, and it produced so many powerful combinations by magnificent preparations as to set descriptions almost at defiance."[1]

Lafayette's reception in Philadelphia was almost if not fully equal to that accorded him in New York and Boston. It is needless to recount his experiences as he travelled through the land. They were everywhere similar to those described. Great crowds gathered to greet him in every city. The mayor or some other noted personage would receive him with an address of welcome. To this he always made a short, unstudied reply, and never failed to say just the right thing. The weight of years sat lightly on his shoulders. He was a fine specimen of manhood, six feet in height,

[1] Quoted by *Magazine of American History*, December, 1887.

muscular and graceful. It is true his almost seventy years had left their mark; his hair, once a deep red, was now silvered, and the blithe step of his youth was gone; but his heart was ever young, his vivacity, his good nature, never forsook him.

He travelled in every State in the Union and visited all the larger cities. He visited Albert Gallatin at Prospect Hill near Uniontown, Pennsylvania, General Jackson at the Hermitage in Tennessee, and the aged Jefferson at Monticello. His progress through the States, though one unbroken ovation, did not in the least turn his head; every honor was received with unfeigned modesty and true democratic simplicity. Nothing perhaps in the life of Lafayette displayed better his true character than the way in which he received the homage of the Nation.

At the Capitol

General Lafayette spent most of the following winter in Washington. On his entering the House of Representatives the members arose, and one of his escort introduced him

after which he was escorted to a sofa placed in the centre of the hall for his reception. Speaker Henry Clay then pronounced an appropriate welcome, in which he feelingly referred to the Revolutionary experience of their distinguished guest, and especially to his intimate relations with the illustrious Washington. Lafayette replied in an equally appropriate speech, after which the House adjourned, and Mr. Clay introduced to him the members individually.

Frequently during the winter the general visited the House and listened to the debates. It was a famous session of Congress. The electoral college had failed to choose a President,[1] and for the second time in our history, and last thus far, that duty devolved upon the House. Party passion ran so high among the followers of the four candidates that there might have been disgraceful scenes but for the presence of Lafayette. No member could forget his decorum in the presence of their honored guest from abroad.

[1] In the electoral college, Jackson had received 99 votes, Adams 84, Crawford 41, and Clay 37.

Our Congress did one thing that winter that the whole Nation applauded. It voted Lafayette two hundred thousand dollars and a township of land in Florida, not as a gift, but as a partial payment for his Revolutionary services. The general was taken wholly by surprise. He could not, however, refuse so generous a gift; and it came good indeed in the remaining nine years of his life, for he had lost his fortune during the various changes of the French Government.

One day, when driving in the carriage with President Adams, Lafayette was amused at the following incident: As they were crossing the bridge over the Potomac River, the toll-gatherer, after counting the horses and persons in the party, informed the President how much the toll was, and the latter handed him the amount. As the party started the toll-gatherer recognized General Lafayette, and called to the President, offering to return the amount of the toll, saying, "All bridges and all gates are free to the guest of the Nation." Lafayette thought this a remarkable illustration of the equality and the democratic sim-

plicity of the people. In Europe the head of the nation finds all gates and bridges free, while here only the guest has a free pass; the President pays his toll among the rest.

Mount Vernon and Bunker Hill

The most touching scene in this memorable tour of Lafayette was his visit to the tomb of Washington. This we can best describe in the words of his private secretary, M. Levasseur: —

"Leaving Washington and descending the Potomac, after a voyage of two hours, the guns of Fort Washington announced that we were approaching the last abode of the Father of his Country. At this solemn signal, to which the military band accompanying us responded by plaintive strains, we went on deck, and the venerable soil of Mount Vernon was before us: at this view, an involuntary and spontaneous movement made us kneel. We landed in boats and trod upon the ground so often worn by the feet of Washington. A carriage received Lafayette, and the other visitors silently ascended the precipitous path

which conducted to the solitary habitation of Mount Vernon.

"Three nephews of General Washington took Lafayette, his son, and myself, to conduct us to the tomb of their uncle; . . . in a few minutes the cannon of the fort, thundering anew, announced that Lafayette rendered homage to the ashes of Washington. . . . As we approached, the door was opened, Lafayette descended alone into the vault, and a few minutes after reappeared with his eyes overflowing with tears. He took his son and me by the hand, and led us into the tomb, where by a sign he indicated the coffin of his paternal friend. . . . We knelt reverently near the coffin, which we respectfully saluted with our lips, and rising, threw ourselves into the arms of Lafayette, and mingled our tears with his."

Next to the visit of Lafayette to Washington's tomb the most interesting incident of his sojourn was his attendance on the ceremonies of laying the corner-stone of the Bunker Hill monument. His second visit to Boston took place in midsummer, 1825, and the corner-stone of the monument was laid

on the seventeenth of June — exactly fifty years after the famous battle had occurred. Lafayette had arrived a few days before, and was the chief guest of the occasion. He had said that Bunker Hill was the pole star on which his eyes had been fixed, and he rejoiced in the prospect of assisting at the jubilee. It was a gala day for Boston. Never before had so many people been packed into the city. "Everything that had wheels and everything that had legs used them to get to Boston." [1]

The roar of cannon announced the dawn of that beautiful day in June; long before the procession of notables arrived, the hill was covered with a solid mass of people. From this mass arose cheer on cheer as the procession moved through the crowd. Then followed the introduction severally of the survivors of the battle of Bunker Hill to the distinguished visitor from France. This pleasant duty fell upon young Josiah Quincy, chief of Governor Lincoln's staff. But there were only a few of the venerable survivors of the battle remaining. All the officers had been

[1] Quincy's "Figures of the Past," 130.

called to their silent home save one, a captain named Clark, now bending beneath his ninety-five years.

It has been said that the most impressive service of the day was the prayer offered by the aged Reverend Joseph Thaxter. Fifty years before, in the morning before the battle, this same man, then Prescott's chaplain, had stood on this same spot and invoked the blessing of God upon the patriot cause. Now, in his old age, he is again permitted to stand in the midst of this joyous throng, and to render the same sacred service in behalf of a great and growing nation.

After laying the corner-stone with his own hands, Lafayette positively refused to take the seat prepared for him under the pavilion. "No," said he, "I belong there, among the survivors of the Revolution, and there I must sit." [1] And so he sat among the veterans, with nothing to shelter him from the scorching sun. The address of the day was made by Daniel Webster, then in the prime of his young manhood. He has been described as "the front of Jove

[1] "Figures of the Past," p. 131.

himself; an eye like Mars, ready to command," when he stepped forth to deliver his oration. Webster is considered the greatest of American orators, and his oration on this day is numbered among the best of his life.

Lafayette returned from Boston to Washington, and, thence, on September the 8th, took his final departure in the *Brandywine* for his native land. The farewell address, pronounced by President Adams, is one of the most felicitous and appropriate of its kind in the English language. Lafayette had spent almost thirteen months in America, and the royal welcome he had received did much to disprove the saying that republics are ungrateful. At various times have noted foreigners, coming to our shores, received the hearty plaudits of the people, but no other has received such a welcome as that given Lafayette. And can such a thing occur again? Have not the conditions that produced it passed away? Perhaps the time may never come again when a foreigner coming to our country will be welcomed with the homage of the whole Nation, as was this hero of the Revolution, this friend of liberty, Lafayette.

CHAPTER XI

The Caroline Affair[1]

To show how an apparently trifling matter may disturb the friendly relations between two great nations, and bring them to the verge of war; to reveal a feature of weakness in our dual system of government, State and National, as regards our foreign relations; and to illustrate that the public mind may be thoroughly agitated over a subject and forget all about it within a few years, – no better example can be found than that known in our history as "The Caroline Affair." Few of our citizens to-day, if asked about the Caroline Affair, could give any intelligent account of it, and the majority could not even tell what it was; while during the year of 1838, and for several years following, it was one of the most prominent subjects

[1] For the facts related in this chapter I am largely indebted to Benton's "Thirty Years' View."

before the American public. It was brought about by an insurrection in Canada, and the dispute it occasioned between the United States and Great Britain became quite serious, and extended over several years.

The Canadian Rebellion

There had been for many years previous to 1837 serious differences in both Upper and Lower Canada, between the popular and loyalist parties. In the latter part of that year an open insurrection broke out against the Government, then in the hands of the loyalists, or British party, as they were called. The discontent had its origin in the concentration of the Government into the hands of a few great families, the misuse of public funds, and the setting apart of certain tracts of land for the benefit of the clergy. The immediate cause of the uprising was the refusal of the Assembly to appropriate money to pay the public officials, and the carrying through the English House of Commons, by Lord John Russell, a series of resolutions, rejecting the demand for an elective legislative council.

The leader of the revolt in Upper Canada was William Lyon MacKenzie, a Scotchman, an editor of Toronto, and first mayor of that city after its name was changed from York. He was a man of much ability, but rash, and wanting in tact; he was an intense hater of toryism in every form. The leader in Lower Canada was Louis J. Papinau, a member of the Assembly from Montreal. Papinau was a man of energy and courage, nor could any one question his honesty. Neither of these men could be accused of sinister motives nor of selfish ambition. They fully believed that the only remedy for the evils in the Government was an appeal to arms. The insurgents called themselves "patriots," and their avowed object was to break away from English rule and to set up a republic in Canada.

The rebellion found many sympathizers in the United States. All along our northern border from Vermont to Michigan there was great excitement. Men assembled and formed themselves into companies and battalions, and chose officers, intending to march into Canada to aid the patriots.

When President Van Buren became aware of these proceedings, he issued a proclamation commanding all citizens to abstain from taking part in such illegal acts, and threatening the guilty with the utmost penalty of the law. He stated that, as the United States enjoyed the most friendly relations with Great Britain, our citizens must not disturb those relations by abetting or aiding an insurrection in her colony. The President did still more; he called upon the governors of the border States to assist in suppressing all illegal movements, which they did; he sent General Winfield Scott with a body of troops to the frontier, and he chartered several steamboats on Lake Erie, manned them with soldiers, and set them to guard against all offenders. Nevertheless, a considerable number of Americans succeeded in crossing into Canada and joining the insurgents.

The rebellion was not a great one, and in a few weeks after the first outbreak it was suppressed. Sir John Colborne with an army of regulars appeared against the rebels, and after a few sharp skirmishes in which

something over a hundred were killed, succeeded in dispersing them. Many laid down their arms and gave up the struggle; others fled across the border into New York. The discontent in Canada was widespread, it is true, but the revolt failed for want of leadership, neither MacKenzie nor Papinau proving successful as military leaders. The movement would scarcely be remembered in history but for an occurrence that immediately gave it international importance, and was henceforth known as the Caroline Affair.

Destruction of the Caroline

The *Caroline* was a small steamboat on Lake Erie, and was owned by a citizen of the United States. She was employed in illegal traffic with the Canadian insurgents on Navy Island. This island, situated in the Niagara River above the falls, had become the rendezvous of a body of rebels to the number of about five hundred under the leadership of MacKenzie. They had been beaten and driven from the mainland by the regular troops, and had here taken refuge with a

view of collecting materials for another attack upon the enemy. Opposite Navy Island, near Chippewa, Ontario, several thousand Canadian troops were stationed under the command of Colonel MacNab. When it became known to MacNab and his soldiers that the *Caroline* was carrying men and supplies to the rebels on the island, they determined to destroy the vessel.

The night of December 29, 1837, was chosen for the exploit. Colonel MacNab sent Captain Drew with a flotilla of five boats to destroy her. They approached silently under cover of darkness to the shore of Navy Island, where the *Caroline* had been seen during the afternoon; but the boat was not there. Captain Drew was unwilling to give up the project so readily, and without authority from his chief proceeded to cross into American waters in search of the offending steamer. About the hour of midnight the searching party found the little steamer moored to the shore at Fort Schlosser, Grand Island, which is a part of the territory of New York. The officers and crew of the *Caroline* consisted of but ten men.

but on that night twenty-three other men, who could not be accommodated at the neighboring inn, had found lodging on board the vessel. Nearly all these were American citizens.

About fifty of the British party, well armed, boarded her without warning to the occupants, most of whom were asleep at the time. The Americans sprung from their berths and grappled with the foe; but the contest was an unequal one, and in a very few minutes the British party had possession of the boat, after having killed one man and wounding several others. The victors now put the Americans ashore, cut the vessel from her moorings, set her on fire and sent her burning over the Falls of Niagara. Several of the men who had gone aboard to spend the night were afterward missing, and it was believed that they were still on board the burning steamer when she leaped over the cataract, and that they found a watery grave in the depths of the dashing river.

The news of the destruction of the *Caroline*, an American boat in American waters manned by American sailors, spread with great rapid-

ity. The feelings of the people in the border States were inflamed to the highest degree. Retaliatory expeditions were immediately planned, but the President took measures to repress them. At the same time he sent a message to Congress stating that a hostile invasion had been made into our territory, and an outrage of the most aggravated character had been committed against our citizens. He also informed them that an immediate demand for reparation would be made upon the Government of Great Britain.

The feeling in Congress was scarcely less intense than along the northern border. An act was immediately passed placing large military supplies in the hands of the President, for the protection of the frontier; while his decision to demand redress was unanimously approved.

Scarcely a week had passed after the unfortunate occurrence, when Mr. John Forsyth, the secretary of state, addressed a letter to Mr. Fox, the English minister at Washington, in which he referred to the invasion of our territory, destruction of our property and the

assassination of American citizens at a time when it was well known that the President was doing all in his power to prevent our people from giving aid and comfort to the insurgents. The British Government made no reply to President Van Buren's demand.

The destroyers of the *Caroline* disclaimed all intention to invade American soil; they fully expected to find the vessel at Navy Island, which belonged to Canadian territory, where she had been seen a few hours before. The boat being engaged in furnishing supplies to the rebels, was, according to the rules of war, subject to seizure by the British. It was, therefore, not the act itself, but the place in which it was done, that caused all the trouble. On this ground the English ministry justified the act without assuming the responsibility. Every effort of our minister at London to bring about a settlement was treated, not perhaps with contempt, but with a dignified silence. So matters continued for three years, when, near the close of Van Buren's administration, another event occurred that changed the relative position of the two countries —

the United States was put on the defensive, and Great Britain became the aggressor.

Arrest and Trial of McLeod

Alexander McLeod was a British subject, a resident of Ontario, a blustering braggart of no importance in his own neighborhood nor elsewhere; yet this man became the cause of the most serious disturbance between two great nations — the United States of America and the British Empire.

Three years had passed since the burning of the *Caroline*. The British Government had made no reparation for the offence and it was still a subject of general discussion among the people; but no one believed that war was likely to result, however the ministry might decide. Alexander McLeod had boasted that he was of the party that had destroyed the *Caroline*, and that he had himself killed one of the "Yankees." He appeared on the American side, and repeated his foolish boast, whereupon he was instantly arrested and clapped into prison on a charge of murder and arson.

The excitement again rose to the highest pitch. The English minister at Washington addressed a letter to the President, calling upon him to take steps for the immediate release of McLeod, taking the ground that the latter if guilty was only acting under authority, and was not personally responsible for what had been done. Mr. Forsyth in a very able paper stated that the crime had been committed on the soil of New York in time of peace between the two countries, that the whole matter of personal responsibility of the perpetrators came under the jurisdiction of that State, nor had our National Government, under our dual system, any power to interfere in the matter. He further stated that if the British Government had assumed the responsibility of destroying the *Caroline*, the United States had not been officially informed of the fact.

This answer of Forsyth plainly exhibits the weak point in our system. Here was a subject of a foreign power indicted for violating the laws of a State in the American Union, and the State has no foreign relations what-

ever.[1] Great Britain could not, therefore, treat with the State of New York; she must deal with the United States Government alone. But the United States Government has no power, under our Constitution, to take a case at common law out of the hands of a State, nor to interfere in any way with constitutional State laws.

The affair had assumed a serious aspect, and thus it remained in an unsettled condition during the winter of 1840–1841. The official term of Martin Van Buren now drew to a close, and William Henry Harrison became President.

No sooner had the United States Government changed hands, than the English ministry assumed a bolder and more menacing tone. The followers of Van Buren were prompt to assert that England had avoided showing her true colors until the party she feared had gone out of power; but she felt that she could bully the new administration as she chose. Whether the change of administration had anything to do with the matter

[1] See Chapter XVIII.

we are unable to say, but it is a fact that the change of attitude in the British ministry began at about the same time.

On the day of Mr. Harrison's inauguration a rumor gained currency through the capital city that the British Government had assumed the destruction of the *Caroline*. One week later the English minister addressed a communication to Daniel Webster, the new secretary of state, demanding in the name of her Majesty's Government, and in a threatening manner, the immediate release of McLeod. It was learned soon after that English ships were being sent to Halifax, troops were landing in Canada, and that Lord Palmerston had openly stated in Parliament that the ministry had assumed the act of destroying the *Caroline*. The London newspapers were aflame with threats of war.

The wisdom of the British ministry in waiting for the new administration to come in before assuming its threatening attitude seemed now to be confirmed; for Mr. Webster, in answering Mr. Fox, stated that "the Government of the United States entertains no doubt

of the asserted British principle," but that McLeod, being in the hands of the State of New York, was beyond the authority of the General Government. This was practically conceding the whole matter. After such a concession from such an authority, the only logical thing for the administration to do was to take the British side, and to use its efforts to effect the release of the prisoner — and that is precisely what it did.

Meantime the trial of McLeod approached. The administration requested the New York authorities to release him without a trial, for the sake of national peace; but this they refused to do. Every means was now employed by the Washington Government to secure the release of the now famous prisoner. It is said that Mr. Webster exacted a secret promise from Mr. Seward, New York's governor, to pardon McLeod if convicted. Mr. Crittenden, the attorney-general of the United States, was sent by the President to the scene of the trial at Lockport to use his efforts for acquittal.

The trial was conducted with the utmost fairness before an impartial judge and jury, — and

how ludicrous it all turned out! It was proved at the trial that McLeod had no part in the destruction of the *Caroline*. His boast was an idle and false one. It was shown that he had slept that night at Chippewa; that, on hearing of the exploit next morning, he expressed the wish that he had been with the party. This wish had been changed to the assertion that he had been one of them, and had killed one of the Yankees! Thus the idle boast of a brainless braggart brought about international disturbance of the most serious nature. Of course McLeod was acquitted, and the war attitude of Great Britain soon subsided. The claims of the United States against the English Government for indemnity on account of the destruction of the little steamboat were eventually abandoned, and the Caroline Affair, which fills a curious page in American history, was soon dropped from the public mind.

CHAPTER XII

The Campaign of 1840

We have all witnessed the torchlight processions and the great mass-meetings that precede a presidential election. Every National political contest is characterized by excitement and commotion among the people; but no other in our history can be compared in unrestrained enthusiasm with that of 1840, when William Henry Harrison was elected to the presidency. This remarkable outburst of feeling was a reaction against the prevailing "hard times" of the years just preceding it.

During the administration of Martin Van Buren, which was but a continuation of the administration of Jackson, the country had suffered severely from the great industrial depression, known as the "Panic of 1837," which left in its trail the wrecks of many fortunes. The Whigs were prompt to blame

the whole trouble on the Democrats. This is a custom in American politics — for the party out of power to blame the party in power with everything that goes wrong. Few statesmen have risen above this practice, especially when their own advancement depended on it. In that degree a statesman becomes a demagogue.

We cannot enter on a general discussion of this panic of 1837, but a few words about it will not be out of place. There was no doubt some truth in the claim of the Whigs that the Democrats had brought about the panic. Jackson's stern dealing with the United States Bank, and his subsequent Specie Circular, probably hastened, though they did not produce, the distressed condition that followed.

But the chief cause of the panic was the spirit of wild speculation that had taken possession of the people. The National debt was paid in 1835, and for the first and only time in American history there was no public National debt. The people seemed to think that they could roll in wealth without limit, and the country was flooded with paper money.

Almost every bank in the country issued paper money far beyond its ability to redeem in coin. Prices rose and work was plentiful at high wages. Great manufactories were begun and never finished. The sale of public lands was increased about sevenfold. Towns were laid out in the West that have not been built up to this day. All this was done on a basis of paper money, far below the value of gold and silver. But the crash came, as it always will under such circumstances.

The Whigs made much political capital out of this panic. During Van Buren's term of office they had gained steadily on the Democrats, as shown by the State elections, and it was generally believed that, if they made no serious blunder, they would win in the approaching National contest.

The Whig Convention

The National convention of the Whigs was held in a newly erected Lutheran church at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, in December, 1839, nearly a year before the time of the election. Before this convention were the names of three candi-

dates — Henry Clay, the great Whig leader and founder of the party; William Henry Harrison, the Ohio farmer and hero of Tippecanoe; Winfield Scott, the leading general of the army and hero of Lundy's Lane. They had all been born in Virginia, but were now of different States.

Scott, whose greatest achievement — his great march upon Mexico — was still in the future, was not very seriously considered by the delegates, and the real contest lay between Clay and Harrison. The majority of the delegates preferred Clay for President; but a few of the ablest men in the party, among whom were Thurlow Weed and Horace Greeley of New York, were using their utmost efforts to make Harrison the candidate.

The leader of the party was Henry Clay, as all acknowledged, but there were serious objections to his nomination. He had been a leader in National affairs for thirty years, and, owing to his positive outspoken manner, had made many enemies. He had been a conspicuous advocate of the American System, or protective tariff, which was not popular in the South. To

these objections was added that of the Anti-Masons. The Anti-Mason party, which had been a strong factor in the presidential contest eight years before, had now dissolved, and most of its members had joined the Whigs; but Clay could not have commanded their votes, as he was himself a Freemason.

These forces, working against Clay, were too great to be overcome. Clay had authorized the withdrawal of his name from the convention, if, in the judgment of his friends, it seemed best for party harmony. It was about this time that he had made use of the now famous expression, "I would rather be right than be President."

Harrison was nominated on the fourth day of the convention by a plan resembling the so-called "unit rule." By this plan the delegates from each State put the power of voting into the hands of a committee of three, chosen from their own number. These several committees then met and chose Harrison for President, and this choice was ratified by the convention, as previously arranged. This was certainly an unfair way of dealing with Mr. Clay. In open convention Clay would undoubtedly have been

the first choice; but the committees, being smaller, were so managed by the politicians as to substitute the name of Harrison for that of Clay.

Clay's friends were deeply disappointed when their chief was set aside, and the Harrison men feared that they might "bolt" the ticket. One of the most ardent followers of Clay, John Tyler of Virginia, is said to have wept when his chief was defeated in convention. To shed tears will not usually prove a means of gaining the presidency of the United States, but in this case it did that very thing. The Harrison followers, to make sure of winning the support of the Clay followers, decided to choose one of the latter for second place, and as they were casting about for a suitable choice — behold, John Tyler in tears! And he was straightway nominated for the vice-presidency.

Tyler was a man of some importance. He was a United States senator from Virginia, and had been governor of that State. He was formerly a Democrat, but, being opposed to Jackson's self-willed policy, he had left his party and joined himself to the Whigs. The

Whigs hoped, by placing him on the ticket, to win a certain floating vote from the South which they could not otherwise have counted on, as well as to appease the followers of Henry Clay.

William Henry Harrison

Let us take a brief view of the chosen standard-bearer of the Whigs in this presidential contest. From the standpoint of availability no better choice than Harrison could have been made. It is the custom of our great political parties to nominate for President, not the greatest statesman in the party, but the one who is best fitted to win votes. Harrison had many points in his favor, not the least of which was that he had been out of public life for many years, had few political enemies, and his views on the great questions of the day were scarcely known. In addition to this he had a very creditable military record, and was the son of one of the Revolutionary fathers, a signer of the Declaration of Independence. Going before the people with this record, he was in position to make a strong race.

In 1791, when the country was shocked by

the news of the great defeat of St. Clair by the Indians of the West, William Henry Harrison, then nineteen years of age, was a medical student in Philadelphia. He at once determined to abandon his studies, go to the West, and lend his aid to retrieve the honor of his country. Washington, who had been an intimate friend of his father, made him an ensign, and the young man set out with a brave heart to win glory for himself and honor for his country. He proceeded on foot across the Alleghany Mountains to Pittsburg, where he took a boat and floated down the Ohio River to Cincinnati, then called Fort Washington.

A little later we find our young hero serving under General Wayne in the Indian wars in northwestern Ohio. In 1801 he was appointed governor of the Indiana Territory, a post which he held for twelve years. In November, 1811, he defeated the Prophet, twin brother of the great Indian chief Tecumseh, in the famous battle of Tippecanoe; and from this battle Harrison received his popular military name.

At the outbreak of the War of 1812, Harri-

son became commander of the army of the Northwest, and he did valiant service for his country in several hard-fought engagements, the most important of which was the battle of the Thames, in which the English and Indians suffered a terrible defeat, and the famous Tecumseh was numbered among the slain.

The war over, Harrison settled down to a life of peace, and a few years later he became a member of the Lower House of Congress, and still later a United States senator from Ohio. John Quincy Adams, when President, appointed Harrison minister to the republic of Colombia, South America; but Jackson, succeeding Adams, recalled him. He then retired to North Bend, a village near Cincinnati, and became a farmer. In 1836 he was the leading candidate of the Whigs for President, against Van Buren.

Harrison did not rank with the greatest statesmen of his time. His ability was far below that of his rival Clay, or of Webster; but he was a man of the purest of motives, had a kind and generous heart, and was above any imputation of political corruption.

The Democrats held their convention in Baltimore and renominated Van Buren without division; but for second place they made no nomination. The Vice-President, Richard M. Johnson of Kentucky, had been chosen four years before by the Senate, and he now expected to be placed on the ticket for reëlection with Van Buren, but there was such opposition to him in the convention that it was decided to again leave the election to the Senate, in case Van Buren was chosen President by the electoral college. The Democrats put forth a strong declaration of principles, pronouncing against a United States Bank, a high protective tariff, and paternalism in general; while the Whigs had no platform at all.

The Log Cabin and Hard Cider Campaign

The campaign of 1840 was the most remarkable in the experience of the American people. It started out with a whoop and a hurrah, and so continued, gaining in enthusiasm, to the time of the election. The Whigs had made "Tippecanoe and Tyler too" their

battle-cry. Their meetings were vast beyond comparison. These mass-meetings, held in all parts of the Union, were addressed by Webster, Clay, Corwin, and a multitude of lesser lights. Harrison himself spoke about half a dozen times. Men would take their wives, sons, and daughters to these great gatherings and remain all day and often all night. At first it was attempted to count the people in attendance, but this was abandoned, and the crowds were measured by the acre. The greatest of these meetings was held at Dayton, Ohio, where the number was estimated at one hundred thousand.

A Democratic newspaper in Baltimore made the statement that Harrison was only a backwoodsman, and would be more in his element in a log cabin with a barrel of hard cider than in the White House at Washington. The Whigs took up the cry, and made the log cabin and the barrel of cider the symbols of the campaign. These they always had at their meetings, with a live coon chained on top of the cabin. Horace Greeley started a paper in New York which he called *The*

Log Cabin. It sprang into great popularity with a single bound, reaching an enormous circulation during the summer.

Then the songs! The campaign songs of 1840 were the most notable feature of the canvass. They were written for the occasion, printed in the papers, and sung at the meetings, rolling forth from fifty thousand throats and reverberating from hill to hill! The poetic merit of these songs is not of a high order, and none of them has lived in our literature. Their number was legion; we subjoin a few specimens.

CAMPAIGN SONGS OF 1840.[1]

Now join the throng and swell the song,
Extend the circle wider;
And let us on for Harrison,
Log cabin and hard cider.

And let Calhoun change with the moon,[2]
And every such backslider;
We'll go as one for Harrison —
Log cabin and hard cider.

[1] These were selected from Greeley's *Log Cabin*. This paper was merged into the *Tribune* in September, 1841.

[2] Calhoun, who had been acting with the Whigs several years had now returned to the Democratic fold.

His cabin's fit and snug and neat,
And full and free his larder;
And though his cider may be hard,
The times are vastly harder.

This one refers to the currency: —

A man there is in Washington
Yclept the arch magician;
He holds the post of president,
The people's high commission.
He pledged himself to follow sure,
Although, it led to ruin,
His 'lustrious predecessor's path.
His name is Mat Van Buren.
Oh, Van Buren, the mighty President Van Buren!

That monster the Sub Treasury
He thrusts upon the nation.
Determined on his reckless course
In spite of lamentation.
Two currencies we now shall have
To add to our disasters;
The officers will have the gold,
The people the shinplasters.
Oh, Oh, Van Buren,
You're an old humbug, Van Buren.

In imitation of Moore: —

There is not in this wide world a veteran so true
As he in the West, the brave Tippecanoe.
Oh, the last ray of feeling and life shall depart
Ere the deeds of his valor shall fade from my heart

This was written for the sailors: —

See yon seaman approach with his face full of ire,
His long tom well loaded and ready to fire.
Just give him the wink and he'll soon take the cue
And tip up his glass for Old Tippecanoe.
And swear that he'll join with the rest of the crew,
To haul down the flag of Van Buren
And run up Old Tippecanoe.

Here's one that seems to aspire to poetic fancy: —

Away in the West the fair river beside,
That waters North Bend in its beauty and pride,
And shows in its mirror the summer sky blue,
Oh, there dwells the farmer of Tippecanoe.

When the clear eastern sky in the morning's light beams,
And the hills of Ohio grow warm in its gleams,
When the fresh springing grass is bent low with the dew,
With his plough in the furrow stands Tippecanoe.
Hurrah for the farmer of Tippecanoe,
The honest old farmer of Tippecanoe,
With an arm that is strong and a heart that is true
The man of the people is Tippecanoe.

The following short one was used perhaps more than any other: —

Farewell, old Van;
You're a used up man.

To guard our ship
We'll try old Tip,
With Tip and Tyler
We'll burst Van's biler.

Where were the Democrats all this time? They were limping behind and doing the best they could. They had meetings, too, but not so large as those of the Whigs. They appealed to reason and argument; but the people refused to argue; they would not reason; they preferred to sing and shout. Old General Jackson came forth from his Hermitage and attempted to stay the rushing tide; but nothing could check the wild enthusiasm for Harrison. The Democrats were left far behind. When the election came Harrison swept the country, carrying two-thirds of the southern States and every northern State except New Hampshire and Illinois.

Last Days of President Harrison

The joy of the Whigs at their victory was unbounded; and they little dreamed of the disasters that awaited them in the near future The winter following the election was one

prolonged jollification. The newly elected President, after a triumphal progress from his western home, reached Washington in February, on the sixty-eighth anniversary of his birthday.[1] He found the city swarming with office-seekers. He was courted and caressed from all sides, and little time was left him for rest.

Inauguration day was dark and foreboding. The new President rode on horseback in a two-hour procession through the streets of the city, after which he stood for another hour exposed, without cloak or overcoat, to a keen, chilling wind while delivering his inaugural address. When night came he was very much exhausted; but he seemed to recover from the effect of his exposure, and the new administration was launched on a promising voyage, with Daniel Webster at the helm as secretary of state.

The President was besieged with office-seekers, who gave him no rest day nor night. So kindly was his disposition that he could turn away none unheard. He rose at an early

[1] Schouler, Vol. IV. p. 359.

hour in the morning, and took a long walk before breakfast, after which he was busy with his new duties till late at night. But his strength was failing, and one morning during his walk he took a chill which speedily developed into pneumonia. On the 4th of April, half an hour after midnight, Harrison was dead, his last words being, "May the principles of government be carried out."

The exultant joy of the Whigs was now changed to mourning. No President had before died in office, and they had not taken such a possibility into account. Tyler would become President, it is true, but they were not sure of Tyler. He had been a Democrat until recent years, and their fears that he was not in sympathy with the party that elected him were soon realized.

The whole people, regardless of party fealty, mourned the departed President. The funeral can best be described in the words of one of our leading historians:—

"The 7th of April was the day of the funeral. The north portico of the mansion was hung with unaccustomed black. They

who had hustled in its walls with headlong zeal a few days before, trod gently and spoke in whispers. The body, in its leaden casket, was taken from the East Room, where it had lain in state on a bier heaped with flowers; it was placed on an open funeral car, which stood at the north portico, covered with black velvet and drawn by six white horses, each with its colored groom. A wailing of trumpets arose, inexpressibly mournful, and a beating of muffled drums, as the military escort began its march down the avenue with arms reversed. The sky was overcast, and only a stray sunbeam from the clouds would shine upon the sable car with its nodding plumes, as the procession moved eastward in slow array." [1]

The body of the dead President was finally carried to his western home, where it was laid to rest in a beautiful spot among the trees, on the banks of the Ohio River.

[1] Schouler, Vol. IV. p. 365.

CHAPTER XIII

Discovery of Gold in California

The event that furnishes the subject of this chapter was but one of a train of events that rendered the middle years of the nineteenth century memorable in the history of America. The discovery of the precious metal on the Pacific slope was in itself a great event, and it became the chief factor in determining the early social conditions of the Great West, and in peopling that region with a rapidity unparalleled in the history of colonization. But this discovery did more; it became a powerful weight in the political balance in which was suspended the destiny of the American people.

At this time there was but one great political issue before the American public — the one that had disturbed the harmony between the North and the South for many years — the slavery question. The South was anxious

about the welfare of her peculiar institution, and as a safeguard against unfavorable legislation had managed, from early in the century, to admit the new States in pairs, one in the North and one in the South, so as to preserve the balance of power in the United States Senate.

The South began to view with alarm the exhaustion of her territory, while that of the North seemed inexhaustible. The Louisiana Purchase was wedge-shaped, the larger end being north of thirty-six-thirty, and the South had used up her smaller end, beginning with the admission of Louisiana in 1812, and ending with the admission of Arkansas in 1836. No more territory remained to the South, except Florida and the Indian Territory until the admission of Texas; and these were no match in extent to the vast region of the Northwest after the settlement of the Oregon boundary. Hence came the Mexican War.

The Mexican War was ostensibly waged on account of Texas; but there was a deeper cause. It was the South that furnished the majority of the soldiers; it was the spirit of the

South that pushed the war to a finish, resulting in the dismemberment of Mexico, and the adding to our public domain the boundless wilderness of the Southwest. The object was to carve the California country into slave States, and thus balance the future free States of the North. Thus we see the great political significance of California.

The treaty of Gaudaloupe Hidalgo, concluded February 2, 1848, resulted, as every one foresaw, in the cession by Mexico to the United States of the unsettled wilderness in the Southwest. The Mexicans did not dream perhaps of the fabulous wealth that lay hidden so near the surface throughout a large portion of the ceded territory; and even if they had, the conditions would not have been changed, for their country lay helpless at the feet of the conquerors from the North.

Sutter's Sawmill

California was a wild country in 1848. The inhabitants, who numbered but a few thousand, were a strange mixture of Yankees from the East, Mormons, Mexicans and wild Indians

with a sprinkling of Hawaiians, negroes, and Europeans. They lived for the most part in rude log huts or adobe houses, scattered through the wilderness near the cattle ranches or missions, or clustered here and there into groups that promised to grow into towns and cities whenever civilization should penetrate into that remote region.

Northeast from the rude village of San Francisco lay the beautiful valley of the Sacramento River. The most important personage in this valley was the enterprising Swiss, John A. Sutter. He had come into that country nine years before, possessed himself of some thousands of acres of land, and on the north bank of the American River, near its junction with the Sacramento, had built a fort, known far and near as Sutter's Fort, and this became the radiating point of all the settlements in the Sacramento Valley.[1]

Sutter had several hundred men in his employ; he owned twelve thousand cattle, fifteen thousand sheep, and other property in like proportion. He was truly a prince in the western

[1] H. H. Bancroft's Works, Vol. 23, p. 12.

wilds, and was monarch of all he surveyed. In the employ of Sutter was a man named James W. Marshall, a carpenter from New Jersey. Sutter decided to build a sawmill, chose Marshall to manage its construction, and made him a partner in its ownership. Owing to its proximity to the best timber land, a site was chosen on the south fork of the American River, about forty miles eastward from Sutter's Fort, and near the base of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. The place was called Coloma.

Here at the beginning of the year 1848 Marshall, with a few Mormons and Indians, was engaged in building the sawmill when he made the discovery that was destined to move the world. They had been digging a mill-race, and to wash out the loose earth a current of water was occasionally turned into it. On the afternoon of the 24th of January as Marshall was walking leisurely along the newly washed out mill-race, he noticed in the sand numerous yellow glittering particles that proved to be gold!

Marshall, a few days later, after convincing himself of the nature of his find, mounted a

horse and hastened to Sutter's Fort. Finding Mr. Sutter alone, he exhibited his nuggets, and the two men, applying every test within their reach, were fully convinced that the shining metal was gold. They then decided not to reveal the secret at that time; but such secrets are hard to keep. In a very few weeks all the settlers in the valley had heard of Marshall's discovery, but the majority were slow to believe that anything would come of it.[1]

More than three months passed before the people throughout California were fully convinced that a great discovery had been made. But when, early in May, some of the miners came to San Francisco laden with bottles, tin cans, and buckskin bags filled with the precious metal — when one Samuel Brannan, holding up a bottle of the dust in one hand, and swinging

[1] It is not true, as many believe, that a favor of excitement was created at the first news of the discovery. The fact is, most of the people beyond Sutter's community dismissed the subject from their minds as of little importance, many refusing to believe the report. The two San Francisco weekly newspapers scarcely mentioned the subject during the winter. Men wishing to visit the alleged gold-fields, would pretend they had other business in that part of the country.

his hat in the other, passed through the streets shouting, "Gold! gold! gold from the American River!"—they could doubt no longer.

The conversion of San Francisco was complete. The people were now ready to believe every report from the mines, however exaggerated; and immediately the rush began. Many sold all their possessions and hastened to the gold-fields. All other business came to a standstill. The two newspapers suspended publication for want of workmen. By the middle of May three-fourths of the male population of the town had gone to the mines. The prices of shovels, pickaxes, blankets, and the like rose in a few days to six times their former value. The town council abandoned its sittings; the little church on the plaza was closed; farms were left tenantless, and waving fields of grain let run to waste. The judge abandoned the bench, and the doctor his patients.[1] The excitement spread down the coast to Monterey, to Santa Barbara, to Los Angeles, and to San Diego, and the result was the same. The people were seized with a delirium, and the one

[1] H. H. Bancroft, Vol. 23, p. 62.

universal cry along the coast, from the seashore to the mountains, was gold! gold!

The "Forty-Niners"

As the telegraph and the railway had not yet penetrated the western wilderness, the news of the wonderful discovery was slow to reach the East. It was estimated that by midsummer four thousand men were scattered through the Sacramento Valley searching for the golden treasure, and this number was considerably augmented before the end of the year; but it was not until the next year that the emigrants from abroad began to arrive. Then they came in crowds. Before the close of the year 1849, seventy-five thousand had reached the golden shores to seek for the hidden wealth. These were called "Forty-Niners"; and this name was also applied to others who came later.

The sea was dotted with ships from every clime headed for the Pacific coast. Great caravans wound their way across the western plains toward the setting sun. Men from every corner of the Union, men of every religion, every nationality, as if led by an unseen siren,

hastened to join the moving trains to the land of gold.

But, lo! a terrible visitor came that year — a visitor that stalks from land to land, and leaves desolation frightful and irreparable in his trail. It was the cholera! The cholera seized these west-bound trains, and many a weary traveller never reached his Eldorado, but found a nameless grave far from friends and home, upon the vast and trackless regions West! Other foes there were — famine and exposure, the snows of the Sierras, the wild beast, and the wild Indian. Against these the hardy pilgrim could, in some measure, fortify himself; but that dreadful enemy, the cholera, found him unarmed — and thousands yielded to its deadly embrace.

A long and wearisome journey it was, but a great number braved its perils. Sometimes the line of wagons was unbroken for miles, and at night the gleaming camp-fires looked like the lights of a distant city.[1] Some took their families with them; but the great majority were unmarried, or left their families in the East, intending to return. It was near

[1] H. H. Bancroft, Vol. 23, p. 146.

midsummer when this stream of humanity began to pour into the Sacramento Valley — some to realize the dream of fortune that had lured them from their homes; but more to be disappointed, to return broken in spirit and in health, or to find an unknown grave in the wilderness.

Not only from beyond the mountains, but also from the sea, the treasure seekers were pouring into the land of promise. They came from every corner of the globe — from the far-off Orient, from the frozen North, and from the sunny South. The news of the golden discovery had been published in all the leading newspapers throughout the world, and the excitement created in foreign countries was scarcely less than in our own country. Ships were diverted from the channels of commerce and headed for California, where they began to arrive in the early spring of 1849; and during that year and the next hundreds of vessels were left helpless at San Francisco, their crews having caught the gold fever and deserted them.[1]

[1] W. T. Sherman's Memoirs, Vol. I. p. 96.

The voyage around Cape Horn was long and perilous, and many a weary voyager wept for joy on coming in sight of the Golden Gate. But a large number went by way of Panama; and, owing to the false promises of the fraudulent agents of whom they had purchased their tickets, and to the inability of the vessels to return from San Francisco for want of crews, thousands were forced to remain for weeks and even months on the isthmus, where the deadly climate and the cholera swept many into the grave.

A View of the Miners and the Mines

Within three years after the first discovery by Marshall it was estimated that one hundred thousand men were at work in the California gold mines. This number was increased but little in the years following, as the new arrivals scarcely exceeded in number the losses by death and the numbers leaving for their homes.

Coloma, the site of the original discovery, was for a time the centre of all mining operations; but, as the crowds came in, the field

was widened until it covered most of the Sacramento Valley and the western slope of the Sierra Nevada Mountains; it was later extended southward through the San Joaquin Valley. The mines in various places were exceedingly rich in gold deposits, as much as ten thousand dollars' worth of the metal being frequently taken from a claim ten feet square. Gold was found in grains, pellets, scales, and in seams through quartz. Nuggets weighing a pound or more were frequently found. The largest nugget ever found in the California mines was unearthed by five poor men in November, 1854. It weighed one hundred and sixty-one pounds, was about seven-eighths pure, and yielded thirty-five thousand dollars.

The yield of gold throughout California reached the sum of sixty-five million dollars in one year (1853); and the entire output in the first eight years was about five hundred million dollars.

Such figures would seem to indicate that every miner must have made a fortune; but this is far from the truth. Some, it is true, were wise enough, after a rich find, to aban-

don the field before spending or wasting what they had gained; others, honest, well-meaning men who had left families in the East, worked steadily with fair returns, until they had laid by a competence, after which they returned to their homes. But the majority of the miners were as poor after several years' toil as when they began.

Some of these were of the unlucky, ne'er-do-well sort who fail at everything they attempt;[1] but a greater number were of the

[1] Among these may be named Marshall, the original discoverer. He lacked the ability to compete with other miners. In religion he was a spiritualist, and he flitted here and there among the mines searching for some rich treasure in obedience to his supposed supernatural guides. Ill luck followed him constantly, and he became petulant, morbid, and misanthropic. He died in poverty and obscurity, alone in his cabin, in 1885. Two years later the California legislature appropriated five thousand dollars for the erection of a monument to the memory of Marshall. The monument was erected on a hill near the place of the first discovery of gold. On the monument stands the figure of a man with outstretched hand, the finger pointing to the exact spot where Marshall picked up the first shining nugget of gold.

Sutter was also among the unsuccessful. The discovery of gold proved his ruin. It led to the destruction of his land and cattle, and scattered his laborers far and wide. His vast possessions soon dwindled to nothing, and for sustenance he

profligate class, who, at the end of each week would hie to the drinking and gambling dens, and there carouse till the week's earnings were gone. And even the honest man was often lured to his ruin by these glittering dens.

The gambling shark was early on the ground. He came not to work, but to lie in wait for the sturdy miner returning to camp with the fruit of his toil; and too often the silly fly allowed himself to be entrapped in the spider's web. One man, after some weeks of fruitless search, found a pocket of gold in a river bank from which he gathered several thousand dollars' worth in a few hours. But prosperity was too much for him; the gamblers had him in their power before night, and by midnight he was drunk and penniless.

The dress of the miner consisted of a coarse woollen or checked shirt, loose trousers tucked into high, wrinkled boots, a broad-brimmed slouch hat, and a belt round the waist, from

accepted donations from the State. He lacked the ability to profit by the vast opportunities that had been thrown in his way. — BANCROFT, Vol. 23, p. 103.

which bristled his knife and pistols. The average miner was honest, faithful to a friend, quick to resent an injury, but forgiving, and generous to a fault. He cultivated an air of reckless daring, and looked with contempt on all things effeminate. When too far from camp to reach it at night, he slept in the open air on a bed of leaves or wrapped in his blanket. He lived so near to Nature's heart that in a few years, if he remained, he lost his hold on the refinements of civilization, and became almost as much a child of the forest as was the untamed Indian. The long hair falling over his shoulders and the untrimmed beard gave him a wild and shaggy appearance, but the twinkle of good humor in his eye soon dispelled any fears that his appearance might awaken in the timid.

Camp-life among the miners had its joys as well as its hardships. There was an air of social freedom unknown in the other settlements. Democracy reigned supreme, and social caste was nowhere tolerated. A man might vie with his neighbor in hunting gold, or in feats of strength; but if he attempted

to outdo him in dress, personal appearance, or refinement of manner, he was instantly marked as an object of ridicule.

Family life among the miners there was almost none. Here and there was a man whose wife had accompanied him and shared his wild life in the wilderness, but the vast majority were unmarried, or had broken home ties, and left their families in the East.

Many of the camps were entirely without women, and here was illustrated most vividly how Nature has made the sexes each indispensable to the other. These horny-handed pioneers would often walk ten miles and more simply to see a woman, without expecting to form her acquaintance. It often happened in the towns, that a miner, meeting a little girl in the street, would catch her up in his arms, shower her face with kisses, and release her only after dropping an ounce or more of gold dust into her hand. Wild life in the forest seemed to increase rather than diminish in these men's hearts the feeling of tenderness toward women and children. The dearth of women on the Pacific coast was

felt for several years, and it left a lasting impression on the community. For many years afterward it was difficult to find a jury in all California that would convict a woman for any crime.

During the first few years following the gold discovery, great numbers of people came to California, not with the intention of returning, but to make the Golden State their homes. Towns sprang up in many places; law and order gradually took the place of rowdyism and disorder. The time was at hand for California to enter the glorious galaxy of States in which she was destined to become one of the brightest stars.

California in National Politics

A presidential election following close upon the Mexican War, one of the successful generals, Zachary Taylor, the hero of Buena Vista, was chosen to the high office. General Winfield Scott had won victories equal to those of Taylor, but he did not receive equal honor to that accorded Taylor; and the reason was that his laurels were won at a later period.

when the American people had, in some measure, lost their interest in the struggle.

A great movement usually wins in popularity as it shows its ability to succeed, but the opposite was true in the case of the Mexican War, notwithstanding the unbroken success of the Americans. The reason for this change of sentiments was, first, the people began to feel a little ashamed of dealing so harshly with a weak sister republic; and, second, the enthusiasm in the North was lessened by the fear that the lands about to be acquired from Mexico would become slave territory, while the people of the South experienced a similar change of heart from the very opposite cause — a fear that those lands would not become slave territory.

During the brief presidential term of Zachary Taylor, the North and the South were at variance on this great question. The strife was deep-seated, and the peace of the Union was seriously threatened, when suddenly a new and unforeseen element entered into the contest. This new element was furnished by the application of California for statehood. Cali

fornia had been settled far more rapidly than any other portion of our country, and before the close of the year 1849 a convention met at Monterey, framed a State constitution, and made application for admission into the Union. This constitution expressly forbade slavery within the State. The miners were, with few exceptions, men who did not own slaves, though many had come from the South. The slaveholders had, as a rule, found it inexpedient to leave their homes, and go to the distant mines, and impossible to remove thither with their slaves and be successful. It was, therefore, the non-slaveholding class that made up the population of the Pacific coast, and, when the constitution was framed, the vote was unanimous to exclude slavery forever from the bounds of the new State.

This was a severe blow to the South. California was the garden of the Pacific slope, the very best portion of the newly acquired territory, and to see their darling institution forever prohibited from it was more than the slaveholders could bear. Moreover, if California became a free State, the balance in the Senate

would be broken, and the preponderance of political power would henceforth rest with the North. The South, therefore, sternly resisted the admission of the new State in that form, and demanded that it be divided in the middle and the southern half made a slave State.

A convention of leading southern statesmen met at Nashville, Tennessee, and declared that any State had a right to secede from the Union. The whole South was threatening to break up the Union if the North did not yield.

Such was the condition of affairs when that memorable year, 1850, was ushered in — memorable not so much for the death of the President and of the great Calhoun, as for the excessive commotion of the people and for the extraordinary working of Congress. California was knocking loudly for admission; the South was hostile and threatening to destroy the Union, while the people of the North were in equal turmoil — about half preferring to yield for the sake of peace, the other half declaring frantically that slavery should encroach no farther on free soil.

While this unrest of the people was at its

height, the Thirty-First Congress met. The United States Senate was the ablest that ever met in the nation's capital. There we find for the last time the great triumvirate, Clay, Webster, and Calhoun, and these were ably seconded by William H. Seward, Stephen A. Douglas, Jefferson Davis, Thomas H. Benton, Salmon P. Chase, and many lesser lights.

Early in the session Clay, the great compromiser, came forward with his last and greatest compromise, known in history as the Omnibus Bill, or the Compromise Measures of 1850. This bill consisted of five measures, one of which was the admission of California as a free State. It was debated for several months, torn to pieces, and finally passed piecemeal. Clay announced that on a certain day in February he would speak on the bill, and thousands of his admirers came to Washington from various sections of the Union to hear this last and greatest speech of his life. Three historic speeches by Calhoun, Webster, and Seward followed in March. Thus the battle of the giants continued during the spring and summer; but before any of the measures

of this famous bill became law, the country was shocked by the death of President Taylor, which occurred on the 9th of July, 1850. Taylor was a southern man and a slaveholder, but his patriotism rose high above his partisanship; his feelings were national and not sectional. After the brief interruption occasioned by the obsequies of the dead President and by the installation of his successor, Millard Fillmore of New York, the discussion of the great measures was resumed, and early in September the one with which we are dealing in this chapter, the admission of California as a free State, became a law. Thus the political balance in the United States Senate was broken, never to be restored. The South had long been in the minority in the Lower House, and now the loss of equal power in the Senate produced the general belief throughout that section that, as regards National legislation, the institution of slavery would henceforth be at the mercy of the North.

CHAPTER XIV

The Underground Railroad

The expression "Underground Railroad" was used to designate the system of giving aid to slaves escaping from their masters. The historic interest in the subject rests, not so much on what was done by its operation, as on the index it furnishes to popular feeling at the North on the slavery question. Under this heading we shall also notice the famous Fugitive Slave Law and its working.

It is difficult for us to realize in this generation how great was the agitation of the people throughout the country on the slavery question, during the decade immediately preceding the Civil War. The abolition sentiment at the North, led by Benjamin Lundy, William Lloyd Garrison, E. P. Lovejoy, Joshua R. Giddings, and others, had begun to make itself felt away back in the thirties. The

Liberty party made its appearance in national politics in 1840. It cast but seven thousand votes that year, but four years later its vote exceeded sixty thousand; and while the party, as such, never played a great part in the Nation's affairs, its steady growth and the principles it infused in the greater political organizations showed plainly the direction in which the political wind was blowing. The South became alarmed at the spread of abolition feeling at the North. Calhoun, the great champion of the slave power, foresaw the threatened dangers, and he solemnly called upon the North to suppress the spreading evil, predicting the gravest consequences if this was not done. But, with all his prophetic vision, the great slavery champion made one serious miscalculation. He was right when he said that if the moral consciousness of a majority of the people opposed slavery, slavery must fall; but he was wrong in believing that human legislation can govern the conscience of the people.

As stated in the last chapter the admission of California as a free State offended the

South; but there was another measure in that famous mid-century legislation that met with still greater opposition, and became a more potent factor in bringing about a final crisis that followed ten years later. This time it was the North that was offended, and the law that caused the offence is known as

The Fugitive Slave Law.

The first Fugitive Slave Law was passed in 1793. The Constitution of the United States had, in Article IV., Section II., provided for the delivering up of persons bound to service, escaping from one State into another. The law of 1793 was therefore constitutional, and it remained in force and unchanged for more than half a century, when it was supplanted by the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850. This law of 1850 was, to say the least, a vicious measure; the old law, hard as it was upon the black man, was now changed for the worse. The South as a whole cannot be said to have been responsible for this inhuman law. It was forced upon the country by a class of slaveholders who were exasperated at the loss of

California, and who now demanded, as a partial compensation, that the Fugitive Slave Law be enacted and accepted by the North. It was supported also by many of the milder type of southern men, such as Henry Clay, and by some from the North, not because they believed it a good thing in itself, but because they believed it necessary to yield thus far to the demands of the South for the sake of peace between the two great sections of the country.

President Millard Fillmore, on September 18, 1850, signed the Fugitive Slave Law, and by this act, more than by any other, he is remembered in American history. By this act he covered his name with dishonor, and no subsequent show of patriotism could efface it. The storm of protest that came from his own section was fierce and uncontrollable, and the name of Fillmore was inseparably linked with the offensive law. In signing that bill, it has been said, the President signed his own death-warrant as a national statesman; and yet it is difficult to see how he could have avoided doing what he did, without bringing on the

country a greater disaster, for the temper of the South was such that a rejection of the law would no doubt have resulted in the immediate secession of some or all of the slave States. And secession at that time would certainly have resulted in a dissolution of the Union, as there was then no great political party pledged to the maintenance of its integrity.

The Fugitive Slave Law was inhuman and unjust. This we say in all candor and without partisan bias; and there is every reason to believe that any intelligent American citizen of to-day, whether from the North or from the South, will subscribe to the same thing. The old Roman law gave the benefit of the doubt to the slave,[1] but our own law in this nineteenth century took a step backward from pagan Rome, and so arranged its provisions that the ignorant black man had no means of defending his own cause.

The act had scarcely become a law when some parts of the North were overrun by man-hunters. These were not usually the owners

[1] Rhodes, Vol. I. p. 186.

of the alleged runaway slaves, but their agents, often coarse, brutal men whose better instincts had been smothered by years of slave-driving. The law empowered these men, not only to capture and bring to trial any negro they might suspect of being the fugitive sought, but also to call, through the aid of officers, on any bystanders to assist in making the capture, and imposed a penalty for refusing.

The trial of the negro was little more than a farce. The agent took him before a commissioner, appointed for the purpose, and made oath that he was the one sought. No jury was required. The black man could not testify in his own behalf. The law was against him in every way; even the commissioner was bribed by it, for if he decided in favor of the agent he received ten dollars as his fee, and but half that sum if he discharged the negro.

It was evident that such a law could do little but irritate all true lovers of justice. At the North it was received by the great majority of the people with every demonstration of disapproval Great meetings were held

in the cities throughout the North, and the Fugitive Slave Law was denounced in unmeasured terms as a violation of the Constitution of the United States and of the laws of God. From thousands of pulpits the law was denounced as an unjust and wicked measure.[1]

On two grounds it was claimed that this law was unconstitutional. First, it denied trial by jury, while the seventh amendment to the Constitution guarantees the right of trial by jury "when the value in controversy shall exceed twenty dollars." The slaveholder evaded this by claiming that there was no controversy between persons, since the slave was only a piece of property, and had no rights before the law. Second, it was an *ex post facto* law, as applied to slaves who had escaped before its passage, and all *ex post facto* laws are forbidden by the Constitution.

There were some twenty thousand negroes in the North who had escaped from bondage before the law was passed, many of whom had lived in the North for many years, had married and

[1] Wilson's "Rise and Fall of the Slave Power," Vol. II. p. 305

settled down to a quiet, industrious life. All of these were subject to the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850; if found by the owner or his agent they could be seized, torn from their families, and carried back to the South.

The most objectionable feature of this law to the Northern mind was found in the clause that made it compulsory on a citizen to aid the slave-hunter in capturing his prey. Thousands of people in the North believed that a man held in bondage for no crime — simply on account of the color of his skin and the accident of his birth — had a right to escape, if he could, and their impulse was to aid him if in their power; but the command of the law was that they must aid his pursuer, regardless of feeling and conscience in the matter. The burning question then arose in the minds of many: Shall we obey the laws of our country or the higher law of conscience? With a large number the decision was for the latter; they determined to resist the law without regard to results. Any one can readily see with what extreme difficulty a law can be enforced when opposed by the moral conscious

ness of a large portion of the people in the midst of whom it is expected to operate.

The Fugitive Slave Law in Operation

There can be no better way of showing the reader how the Fugitive Slave Law worked than to cite a few examples of its practical application.

One of the first instances to attract attention was the case of William Smith of Columbia, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Smith was a colored man who had escaped from slavery long before, and had lived quietly at Columbia for several years with his wife and children. One day, while working on the street, he saw a slave-catcher approaching him, and, attempting to escape, he was shot dead.

Another instance, occurring in the same county in 1851, turned out differently and attracted far wider attention. A man named Gorsuch, from Baltimore County, Maryland, with his son and several friends, came into the county in search of two fugitives who had escaped three years previously. The party,

all well armed, found their prey near the little town of Christiana. The negroes had taken refuge in an old house, where, with several friends of their own color, they determined to fight for their freedom, the fugitives declaring that they would rather die than go back into slavery. A horn was blown as a signal to the colored people of the neighborhood, and in a short time a large number, armed with guns, axes, and clubs, had collected. Two white men also appeared, and were called on by the officer in charge to assist in making the arrest. This they indignantly refused to do. They belonged to the Society of Friends, and the Friends were ever vigilant in assisting the slave when possible.

The Gorsuch party demanded the surrender of the fugitives, and, on being refused, they opened fire. The fire was returned; Gorsuch was killed and his son severely wounded. President Fillmore soon afterward sent a large body of officers to the scene to arrest the offenders. Several men were brought to trial for resisting the law, but the moral sentiment in Pennsylvania rendered conviction extremely

difficult, and no punishments followed. The two fugitives were never captured.

On numerous occasions fugitives were caught and carried back to the South; but the temper of the northern people was such that it was no easy task to enforce the law, and the fugitive was usually able to evade the slave-hunter; this was sometimes accomplished by the aid of men who defied the law and forcibly rescued the negro. This is well illustrated in the case of the "Jerry rescue" at Syracuse, New York. In October, 1851, a mulatto named Jerry McHenry, an industrious mechanic of Syracuse, being claimed by a man from Missouri as his former slave, was captured and imprisoned to await trial. Early in the evening twenty or thirty men, led by Gerrit Smith, a wealthy, great-hearted man, and the Rev. Samuel May, a man of unwonted courage, determined on the rescue of Jerry. With the utmost coolness they proceeded to the police-office, overpowered the officer, battered down the door, rescued the prisoner, and placed him in a carriage. After some days' concealment in the city, Jerry was sent to Canada.

where the laws of England made him a free man.

The case of Anthony Burns of Boston attracted national attention and became the most famous of all the captures under the detested law. Burns was a colored waiter in a Boston hotel. He was a runaway from Virginia, and was captured by the slave-hunters in May, 1854. In a short time the city was in an uproar concerning Burns, who was confined in the court-house, the laws of the State prohibiting the use of the jail for such a purpose. The New England sense of justice was deeply offended, and the people acted on the principle laid down by Sumner that they would not permit a man who had lived peaceably among them for several years to be dragged back into slavery.

An excited meeting was held at Faneuil Hall and was addressed by Wendell Phillips and Theodore Parker. Late at night this meeting resolved itself into a mob, and the men that composed it proceeded to the court-house determined to rescue Burns if in their power. Here they found a crowd of colored men already

battering at the court-house doors. The militia was called out and the mob driven back. One man was killed. The prisoner was not rescued, and the city remained like a seething ocean all night. When Burns's trial came off, he was awarded to the claimant. He was marched through the streets of the city guarded by several hundred armed soldiers. No further attempt at his rescue was made, but the streets were lined with an excited multitude, hissing and jeering and threatening. The prisoner was landed in a vessel waiting at the wharf, and it was soon steaming away bearing him back to the land of bondage.

Anthony Burns's experience had so profoundly stirred public feeling in Massachusetts that it was not difficult to raise a purse for his purchase. This was done, and his owner being induced to sell him, he was purchased, brought back to the North, and sent to Oberlin College in Ohio, where a few years later he died.

Working of the Underground Railroad

The system of giving aid and comfort to runaway slaves had its origin in the early part

of the century, and later came to be known as the Underground Railroad. The term was first used in this sense at Columbia, Pennsylvania. Most of the people of this town were in sympathy with the slave, and when a fugitive arrived here, he was hidden or spirited away by them. The slave-hunters would track their property as far as Columbia, when they lost all trace or sign, and they declared that "there must be an underground railroad somewhere."[1]

The system was for many years before the Civil War carefully organized, had its regular stations twenty miles or more apart, and did most of its work in secret. A Vigilance Committee in Philadelphia, composed of the best citizens, received the fugitives who came to that city, and furnished hundreds of them with free tickets to Canada.

Many of the slaves in the South were treated with kindness by their masters and had little desire for freedom; others were content to remain in bondage because of their gross ignorance. But with a large number — especially those who had picked up the rudiments of an

[1] Walton and Brumbaugh, "Stories of Pennsylvania," p. 271

education — there was that longing for liberty so natural to the human heart. Others were driven to seek their liberty by cruel treatment, and still others because of their fear of the dreadful auction block. However humane the slave owner might be, however foreign it was from his intention to part with any of his servants, his sudden death or business reverses might at any time land them on the auction block for the southern market; and the most dreadful thing that could happen to the slave of the border States was to be "sold to Georgia" or "sold down the river" to supply the great plantations in the South. When once a black was sold to "a trader," and carried to the far South, he was seldom seen or heard of again by his friends and kindred. Such a separation of families and the system that produced it can be condoned only on the assumption that the negro is devoid of those finer feelings, those ties of consanguinity, so characteristic of our own race.

Thousands of slaves in whose bosoms burned a longing for liberty were too timid or too ignorant to make an attempt to escape. They

all knew that freedom lay in the direction of the north star, but further than this the majority knew nothing, except that the distance was vast and that the way was fraught with unknown perils. Nevertheless, for many years before the war, an average of about a thousand slaves each year escaped from their masters into the free States. The fugitives for the most part came from the border States, and comprised usually the most intelligent of the race.

Various methods were used by the slaves in effecting their escape. Some came from the far South, guided by the north star or by the trend of a mountain range, secreting themselves during the day. Some were stowed away in steam-vessels, others rowed in open skiffs for hundreds of miles, thus eluding the keen-scented bloodhound and the more dreaded slave-catcher. A few reached the North in boxes, sent as common merchandise. Women in male attire and men dressed in the garb of women succeeded in reaching the land of freedom. In a few instances a slave with a fair skin and scarcely distinguishable from one

of the dominant race would assume the habit and importance of the master, and take the ordinary mode of conveyance. The few examples that follow will give a fair knowledge of the working of the Underground Railroad.[1]

Anthony Blow was a Virginia slave, the property of a widow, and, on her death, was about to be transferred to her son-in-law, a young lawyer. Anthony was quite black, rather intelligent, and of a temperament that would not submit to the yoke of slavery. He had been shot on three occasions for refusing to be flogged. His new master decided to sell him to the traders as soon as he came in possession of him, and he taunted Anthony by frequently reminding him of this intention. But when the day of the auction arrived the negro was nowhere to be found, and the most diligent search for him proved unavailing. After concealing himself in the most unheard of places, in which he suffered almost death, he found an opportunity to escape to the North. An employe on a steamship stowed him away

[1] See Still's "Underground Railroad," Preface. Most of the examples that follow are taken from this work.

in a narrow space directly over the boiler, where the heat was intolerable. He thought, however, that he could endure it for the two days required to reach Philadelphia. But the ship encountered a storm, was partially disabled, and eight days elapsed before she reached the northern port. At the end of this time the stowaway was more dead than alive; but, possessing a powerful frame and the best of health, and being used to suffering, he soon recovered under the fostering care of the Vigilance Committee.

The story of Alfred Thornton excited deep interest, as related by himself after reaching free soil. His master was a kind man and Alfred was his constant companion; the relation between the two was that of friends. No slave in the South was more contented with his lot than Alfred Thornton. But the master met with serious business embarrassment. One day as Alfred was at work he saw the constable and a trader approaching him. He grew anxious as they came up, and when they took hold of him he understood all in an instant He leaped from their grasp and ran with all

the speed in his power to find his master The trader fired two shots at him without effect. Finding his master, Alfred threw his arms about his neck, and cried, "Oh! Massa, have you sold me?" "Yes," was the answer. "To a trader?" "Yes." "Oh! Massa, Massa, why did you not sell me to some of the neighbors?" "I don't know," was the dry answer.

Alfred, now seeing the constable and trader approaching, released his hold and ran again. After running about a mile he leaped into a mill-pond, where he remained for two hours holding his face above the water. While in this position the thought first came to him that he would strike for freedom; and after many weary days he succeeded in crossing Mason and Dixon's Line.

In the spring of 1859 a southern lady of wealth and refinement who stood high in church and social circles was travelling in the North with a slave woman called Cordelia. She stopped at Philadelphia and took up lodging in a fashionable boarding-house, where she received attentions from the *élite* of the city. Cordelia, a half-white woman of fifty-seven

years, neat and respectful, was her body-servant, and attended all her wants. The lady professed to have no fear that her servant would leave her, owing to kind treatment the latter had always received. But no sooner did a member of the committee inform the slave-woman that under the laws of Pennsylvania she was entitled to her freedom, than she eagerly seized the opportunity. Her owner was astonished that Cordelia was ready to leave so "kind and indulgent a mistress," and she begged the woman to remain with her. The answer to her pleadings can best be given in Cordelia's own eloquent words:

"I have attended you ever since you were born; I have dressed you and combed your hair, put on your shoes and stockings, and nursed you in sickness. I stood by your mother in all her sickness and nursed her till she died. I waited on your niece night and day for months, till she died. I waited on your husband in his sickness, and shrouded him in death. What do I get for all this? You sold all my four children. When my poor child Nancy was too sick to work, you sent

her to the field and told the overseer to whip her every day and make her work, or kill her. When he sent her back and said, 'There's no use to try, her health won't stand it,' you sold her to a New Orleans trader. In selling my poor children, you treated me as if I had been a cow; and you've threatened to sell me on the first insult. But you won't; I'm as free now as you are."

In Pennsylvania there had been a law passed that gave freedom to any slave who desired it, if brought into the State by the owner. The most notable case that came under this law was that which brought freedom to Jane Johnson and her two children, and which brought national fame to Passmore Williamson, a young Philadelphia lawyer.

Jane Johnson and her two little boys, aged seven and ten years, were the property of a prominent gentleman of Washington, who was appointed in 1855 to a government commission in Central America. While *en route* to New York, where he was to take a steamer, he stopped in Philadelphia. Mr. Williamson, hearing that a slaveholder with his slaves was

on board the boat at the wharf in the Delaware, proceeded with a few companions to the boat, and informed the black woman that she and her children were entitled to their freedom, if they desired it. Before the woman had time to answer, her owner informed Mr. Williamson that "Jane did not wish to be free, that he would give her her freedom at some future time, and that she had children in the South from whom she would refuse to be separated." But Williamson addressed himself directly to the woman, and told her that if she desired her freedom she could have it that moment by rising and following him, and this she did.

Williamson was soon afterward thrown into prison, charged with "forcible abduction" and contempt of court for refusing to disclose the hiding-place of the rescued slave-woman. His imprisonment, covering several months, attracted widespread attention. Hosts of friends visited his cell, and he received letters of sympathy from all parts of the North.

The owner of Jane Johnson immediately began legal proceedings to get her back, declar-

ing that she had been forcibly taken from him against her own will. But Jane set all doubts at rest by swearing in open court that no one forced her in the least, that she left the boat of her own free will, and that she would rather die than go back into slavery.

A novel means of escaping from slavery is illustrated in the example of Henry Brown. Brown was an unhappy piece of property, and, after contemplating long upon how he might escape from bondage to a land of liberty, he decided on the plan of having himself boxed up and sent by express. He accordingly made a strong box of wood three feet long by two feet wide and three feet eight inches high. In this box, lined with baize and securely nailed up by his best friend, the negro was stowed, his supplies consisting of a few biscuits and a bladder of water. The box was sent from Richmond, Virginia, to the Vigilance Committee at Philadelphia. It was marked, "this side up with care;" but this did not avail with the different expressmen, and part of the time it was upside down and the occupant rested on his head.

"Your case of goods is shipped, and will arrive to-morrow morning," was the contents of a telegram received by a member of the Vigilance Committee on the day of the shipping of Brown. To avert suspicion the committee secured the services of a prominent merchant of the city to receive the goods from the express office. The box was soon landed in a private room of the committee, and the door safely bolted. The members of the committee were much agitated. They could hardly believe that the colored man would be alive after spending twenty-six hours in such a condition. Great, therefore, was their astonishment and delight, when one of them rapped gently on the box and said, "All right," and was instantly answered by a faint voice from within, "All right, sir!"

In a few moments, with saw and hatchet, the lid was removed, and Brown emerged as one rising from the dead. From this time forth he was called Henry "Box" Brown. After shaking hands with his deliverers he informed them that he had promised himself when leaving Richmond that his arrival hymn, if he lived,

should be the fortieth Psalm. His small audience grew solemnly silent, and he sang slowly and touchingly, in the hollow, musical voice peculiar to his race, the Psalm beginning, "I waited patiently for the Lord; and he inclined unto me and heard my cry."

In almost every issue of the southern newspapers during the period just preceding the Civil War, advertisements of runaway slaves appeared. The following, from a paper dated October, 1857, is a fair sample:[1] —

"$2000 *Reward.* — Ran away from the subscriber on Saturday night, the twenty-fourth inst., fourteen head of negroes, viz:" (here follows the name and description of each).

"I will give $1000, if taken in the county, $1500 if taken out of the county and in the State, and $2000 if taken out of the State; in either case to be lodged in the —— jail, so that I can get them again. SAMUEL P ——.

"P. S. Since writing the above, I have discovered that my negro woman, Sarah Jane, twenty-five years old, stout built and chestnut color, has also run off. S. P."

[1] See Still's "Underground Railroad," p. 101.

We close this chapter by relating one more escape by means of the Underground Railroad — one that appears more like a romance than an occurrence in real life. William Craft and his wife, Ellen, were slaves on a Georgia plantation. They longed for liberty; but the distance to free soil was great, and the obstacles to freedom seemed insurmountable. William was of a chestnut color, while his wife was so fair that she could pass for a white woman.

At length these two seized on a bold plan for effecting their escape from bondage. Ellen was to dress in man's attire and travel as a young planter with William as the servant. A fashionable suit of clothes was soon procured, and the woman's hair was trimmed in the style worn by the southern gentlemen. But there were many precautions necessary. Ellen was beardless, and to overcome this difficulty the young planter's face was muffled up as if he were suffering with neuralgia. In fact, it was decided that the young man must seem very much indisposed and journeying northward for medical treatment. To obviate the necessity of registering at hotels the right arm was placed

in a sling; large green spectacles were worn to hide the feminine eyes. To avoid making acquaintances he was to be very hard of hearing, and refer all questions to the servant.

They both played their parts most skilfully. Ellen, when approached by any one, assumed an air of bold superiority, and referred all questions to the servant, who was exceedingly active and attentive to his young master. They stopped at first-class hotels in Charleston and in Richmond without creating suspicion; but a serious obstacle confronted them in Baltimore. When William applied at the ticket-office for tickets to Philadelphia, the agent informed him that it was a rule of the office to require bonds for all negroes applying for tickets to go North, and none but gentlemen of well-known responsibility could obtain them.

The servant assumed a very innocent air and replied that he knew nothing about that, his master was hastening to Philadelphia for medical treatment, and his health was so frail that it was feared he would not hold out till he reached that city. The agent, at last convinced of the urgency of the case, threw out the tickets, and

a few hours later the fugitives reached the City of Brotherly Love. After remaining here for some time it was thought prudent to seek a home farther from the bounds of slavery, and they went to Boston, where, the fame of their marvellous escape having preceded them, they were received with a royal welcome. Here they lived, with no attempt at concealment, for two years — until the Fugitive Slave Law was passed — when it was learned that two slave-hunters were prowling about the city in search of them.

William and Ellen Craft had made many friends in Boston, among whom were Theodore Parker, the famous preacher, and William Lloyd Garrison, editor of the *Liberator*. Their friends avowed that on no pretext should they be dragged back into bondage, that they would defend the fugitives at all hazards. When, however, it was found that warrants had been issued for the arrest of the Crafts, when it was seen that their freedom could be maintained in Boston only by the shedding of blood, an easier method was devised, a purse was raised for them, and they were sent rejoicing on

days, and our grandfathers had miscalculated. when they believed that it would ultimately die and disappear of its own accord. "Least of all could the North or England cast a stone at the South, for each had a hand in the establishing of negro slavery."[1]

The South is to be congratulated on the results of the Civil War. Since the removal of that blighting institution, which weighed like a nightmare on southern prosperity, no section of our country has brighter prospects than the sunny South, and every fair-minded citizen of that region knows this to be true. The writer has talked with many ex-slave-holders on this subject, and, while some are not reconciled to the "way in which it was done," they all agree that the South is far more prosperous since the curse of slavery has been removed, and under no consideration would they have their slaves back were it in their power. The Civil War was a surgical operation, — severe indeed, but necessary, — and by it the normal health of the Nation has been restored. Since that war — since the

[1] Rhodes, Vol. I. p. 379.

downfall of slavery — the North and the South have come to feel a common brotherhood as never before; and so may it ever be; may there be one grand harmony increasing with the years!

CHAPTER XV

The Kansas-Nebraska Bill

An act of Congress passed in 1854 and known in history as the Kansas-Nebraska Bill has been pronounced the most momentous piece of legislation in the United States before the Civil War. It came as a shock upon the country in time of unwonted stillness. For more than ten years, beginning with the Texas question and ending with the Compromise of 1850, there had been a succession of thunderbolts from the political sky, all bearing on the one disturbing element, slavery. The people had grown weary of the despised subject and they longed for rest. With the acceptance, in 1852, of the Compromise as a finality by both political parties, it seemed at last that (barring the local disturbance occasioned by the Fugitive Slave Law) the longed-for haven was at hand. But in the midst of the calm

there broke forth a political storm more fierce than any before known to that generation. It came in the form of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, the account of which will be preceded by a brief review of the

Presidential Election of 1852.

The Whig party in 1852 was in a demoralized condition, owing, principally, to the unpopular Omnibus Bill, of which that party was the father. The herculean efforts of the leaders to bring about harmony proved fruitless. Before the Whig convention, which met in Baltimore in June, were three candidates, all well known to the American public. First, President Fillmore, the choice of the entire South. A Northern man, it is true, was Fillmore; but he had won the southern heart by signing the Fugitive Slave Law, and now he enjoyed the support of that entire section. Second, Winfield Scott, the choice of the northern wing of the party, led by William H. Seward. Scott was a Virginian by birth, but he was now known to be, not a slave propagandist, but a sympathizer with

the free-soil sentiment of the North. The third candidate was Daniel Webster. The following of Webster was a personal following and was much smaller than that of either of the others. He was not seriously considered by either of the great wings of the party, and the real contest lay between Scott and Fillmore.

The southern delegates insisted on embodying in the platform a final acceptance of the Fugitive Slave Law. To this the northern delegates demurred, but finally yielded, with a kind of tacit understanding that they would be allowed to name the candidate. Scott was therefore nominated, but not until the fifty-third ballot had been cast, so reluctantly did the South accept him. This choice, however, did not bring harmony to the party. The South was not satisfied with Scott; because, first, he refused to express himself on the Fugitive Slave Law, and second, he was too intimate with Seward, whom every slaveholder hated. A written protest, signed by Alexander H. Stephens, Robert Toombs, and other leading southern Whigs, utterly repudiated Scott,

and declared that the signers of it would not support him. In this disorganized condition the Whigs went before the country asking the suffrages of the people, in 1852. Their only consolation was that the Democrats were in little better condition.

The Democrats, having also met in Baltimore, the great convention city of this period, had several leading candidates to choose from. There was Cass, the stalwart and dignified leader; but Cass was weakened by his defeat of four years before at the hands of General Taylor, and besides, he was growing old, and some called him the old fogy. Next, Buchanan, a leader among the politicians, but not widely popular with the masses outside his own State. The third candidate was a young man, brilliant, dashing, and of extraordinary talents — Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois. Douglas was but thirty-eight years old, the youngest man ever seriously proposed for President of the United States, until the rise of Bryan in 1896. But Douglas was too young and too dashing to please the older members, and this constituted his weakness before the convention. A fourth

candidate was ex-Governor Marcy of New York; but, not having made his peace with his own State, in which he had so lately been a faction leader, how could he expect the support of the Nation?

Thus each prominent candidate disclosed a weakness that prevented his nomination. The convention balloted forty times without success, when a "dark horse" began to loom into view. It was a young man from New Hampshire, named Franklin Pierce. Pierce was a man of some note. He had been in both Houses of Congress, had declined an invitation to a place in Polk's cabinet, and had enlisted as a volunteer in the Mexican War, where the President's favor soon made him a brigadier-general, though he knew little of military affairs. His father, a private soldier of the Revolution, had risen to the governorship of New Hampshire. These advantages, together with his fine appearance, his winning manners, and his jovial nature, made Franklin Pierce a general favorite; but in no sense could he be ranked among the leading statesmen of his time.

Nathaniel Hawthorne, an old friend and col-

lege classmate of Pierce, wrote his biography, which received a wide circulation, and the Democrats were soon united as one man for their candidate — a thing that could not be said of the Whigs. As the campaign progressed it was plain that Scott was losing ground. This continued steadily until the election, when Pierce was triumphantly elected, Scott carrying but four States, two in the North and two in the South.

This was the last National campaign of the Whigs. The party was doomed and was tottering to its fall, and ere another quadrennial election came round the story of its life was history.

The Democratic party seemed now to have a powerful hold upon the country. None could deny that the future seemed to insure for it a long lease of power. Already the leading spirits of the party were casting longing glances toward the next presidential election, and never before did the glittering prize seem more sure to the one who should be so fortunate as to win the nomination.

Stephen A. Douglas

Among the aspirants to the great office was the young and brilliant leader from Illinois, and to him must be attributed the one extraordinary act of Congress by which the Pierce administration will be remembered in American history. Douglas was a native of Vermont; he had migrated to the prairie State as a penniless youth, had first worked at a trade, then read law, and entered the field of politics. So rapid was his rise that ere he had reached his fortieth year he was an acknowledged leader in the United States Senate. As a popular leader representing the great West there was none to dispute his sway.

But in those days it was necessary for an aspirant to the presidency to bring forth fruits to win the favor of the South, and this Douglas had never done. While searching about for some bold issue by which he could make himself champion, Douglas decided upon the all-important measure known as the Kansas-Nebraska Bill.

Douglas was the chairman of the Committee

on Territories. There was a vast tract of wilderness called Nebraska, lying north and west of Missouri, and comprising almost half a million square miles. In January, 1854, Douglas brought into the Senate a report of the committee providing for the division of Nebraska into two Territories to be known as Kansas and Nebraska. If that had been all it would have attracted little attention; but there was one little clause in the report that caused all the trouble, and that was that each Territory should decide for itself whether slavery should exist within its bounds. This may seem innocent enough at first sight; but it repealed the Missouri Compromise of 1820. That compromise had forbidden slavery forever in the Louisiana Purchase north of thirty-six degrees and thirty minutes, and both of these Territories lay north of that line.

For a whole generation the Missouri Compromise had been looked upon as a solemn compact as binding as a treaty between the North and the South. It is true the Congress of 1820 had no power to bind its successors; but the Missouri Compromise was more than an act

of Congress. It was a solemn agreement of the people, and that agreement carried with it a moral force that no subsequent Congress had a moral right to disturb. Thousands of people at the North, who were alarmed at the growing power of slavery, had yet this one consolation: It cannot come beyond the forbidden line of thirty-six-thirty. But now suddenly, unexpectedly, unasked by North or South, Douglas sprung upon the country this Kansas-Nebraska Bill, annulling the Missouri Compromise, and enabling the slaveholder to carry his human property into the Territories of the Northwest.

Douglas had consulted with two persons before taking the important step — President Pierce and his secretary of war, Jefferson Davis.[1] These three had a long conference on Sunday, January the 22d, and they agreed that the Missouri Compromise should be repealed. On the next day Douglas brought the bill before the Senate. But Douglas did not have smooth sailing. There were powerful leaders in his own party whom he could not

[1] Schouler, Vol. V. p. 282.

control. Before the close of January these had published a vigorous protest in the form of an "Appeal of the Independent Democrats in Congress to the People of the United States." This was written by Chase and signed by the leading Free-soil Democrats in Congress; and it marked the beginning of the great revulsion of political parties brought about in the following years by the Kansas-Nebraska Act.

The news that such an act was about to be thrust upon the country fell like a bomb in every section of the North. The people were first dumfounded at the audacity of Congress in thrusting such a measure upon them without making it an issue in any campaign. When they recovered from their first astonishment they made themselves heard. The newspapers, with few exceptions, denounced the proposed act with great vehemence; various State legislatures raised their voices of protest. Excited multitudes assembled in the cities and towns throughout the North to protest against the measure, and the moral indignation that prevailed had never been equalled since the battle of Lexington at the outbreak of the Revolution.[1]

[1] Rhodes, Vol. I. p. 463.

Let us take a view of the Senate. One man there attracts the attention of the country. He is rather short of stature and compactly built, has a smooth-shaven face, raven-black hair, keen, penetrating eyes, and deep, melodious voice. It is Stephen A. Douglas, the "Little Giant from the West." Douglas was the acknowledged leader of the dominant party in Congress, and as a parliamentary debater he had no equal in the Nation. His extraordinary powers lay, not in his extensive learning, for he was not highly educated, but rather in his subtle power of reasoning, his ability to becloud and belittle the best argument of an opponent, to throw the main points in the background, and to bring forth some unimportant matter, and make his hearers believe that it was *the* thing after all. There was not a man in the Senate who could evade his cunning or withstand him in debate.

But the opposition must not be underrated. There were Salmon P. Chase and Benjamin Wade of Ohio, Sumner and Edward Everett of Massachusetts, Seward of New York, Sam Houston of Texas, the old hero of San Jacinto,

and others of lesser note. These made a strong coalition against the proposed measure, and they disputed the ground inch by inch; but the skill and genius of Douglas triumphed over them all. The bill passed the Senate on the fourth of March at five o'clock in the morning, after Douglas had spoken all night.

This last speech of the Illinois senator on the Kansas-Nebraska Bill was the greatest he ever made. A short time before midnight he appeared before the crowded chamber with the conscious strength of a gladiator entering the arena. His eyes were lit with the fire of genius. Knowing that the country had already condemned him, and believing this to be his great opportunity to vindicate himself, he now put forth his best efforts; and the skill and power with which he advocated his measure won the admiration even of his opponents.

When the bill passed the boom of cannon from the navy-yard announced the victory to the sleeping city. As Chase walked down the Capitol steps in the gray dawn of that morning, he exclaimed to his friend Sumner, "They celebrate a present victory, but the echoes they

awake will never rest until slavery itself shall die." Late in May the famous act passed the House, was signed by the President, and became the law of the land.

Reception of the Bill at the North

Stephen A. Douglas was a lover of his country, and, at heart, no doubt an honest man. Had he foreseen what a storm of indignation his favorite measure would create in the free States, there is reason to believe that he never would have brought it forth. In bidding for southern favor he had sacrificed his popularity in his own section. Next to Douglas the one who reaped the greatest harvest of dishonor was Franklin Pierce. He was the one man who could have prevented the enactment of the law, but, like most of the politicians of the time, he was unable to rise above an obsequious truckling to the Slavocracy. The anger of the people was fierce and implacable. Douglas was burned in effigy in many places, and was bitterly denounced throughout the free States. Attempting to make a speech in his own city, Chicago, he was hooted off the stage. He was

called the Esau who sold his New England birthright, the betrayer of his country, Judas Iscariot, and the like; and a society of women in Ohio reached the acme of contempt by sending him thirty pieces of silver.

The leaders of the party in power had thus enacted into law a measure the importance of which can scarcely be overestimated; but in so doing they had made one fatal blunder — they had not consulted the people! The people are the masters in this country, say what they will of political bosses. The people may be disregarded and their rights trampled under foot for a time, but they will eventually rise and assert their power, and woe to the public man who dares disregard them! However popular, however powerful, a political leader may be, if he set himself against and defy the masses of the citizens who have raised him to power, he will soon find himself crushed by the ponderous weight of public opinion.

Douglas had failed to count the cost. Dashing, brilliant leader that he was, only forty-one years old, he had won the American heart as few had ever done before; but now he oversteps

the limit of public forbearance, and he finds himself dashed to the ground like a broken toy, and his presidential prospects forever blasted.

Results of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill

There is no doubt that the Civil War was hastened by this famous legislation of 1854. Some even claim that there would have been no war but for the repeal of the Missouri Compromise; this is perhaps claiming too much. But the bill had a wonderful effect in breaking up old party lines at the North. Most of the new States of the Northwest had been solidly Democratic from the time of their admission into the Union, but now they abandoned their first love, and some have never since returned to it. The same is true of several States in the East. The Kansas-Nebraska law gave a final blow to the expiring Whig party, and opened the way for the formation of a new party. The founding of the Republican party within the same year must be named as an indirect result of the passage of this law.

The Kansas-Nebraska bill caused the border

warfare in Kansas; it rendered the Fugitive Slave Law a dead letter throughout the North, it brought forth that other son of Illinois, greater than the "Little Giant," into the arena of national politics.[1] It brought about the great political revolution of 1860; it marked the beginning of the end of the more than a half century of Democratic rule in the United States.

[1] Rhodes, Vol. I. p. 490.

CHAPTER XVI

The Lincoln-Douglas Debates

The great political discussion known by the above heading was, with reference to the high character of the contestants and the importance of the subjects discussed, the most significant of its kind in American history. The contest was certainly a battle of the giants, and the impression it made on the country was deep and lasting.

A View of the Two Men

The principals in this great duel, Stephen A. Douglas and Abraham Lincoln, had much in common. Both had risen from poverty and obscurity — one, born among the New England hills,[1] had sought his fortune in the great West while still a boy, had entered the political arena in his early manhood, and had risen until he

[1] See Chapter XV.

now held the most conspicuous position in the highest legislative body in the United States; the other, born in a slave State among the lowliest of the lowly, had in early childhood crossed the border, and was reared among the untutored backwoodsmen, where he picked up a meagre education as best he could, had entered public life, and, after varying fortunes for a quarter of a century, was now the acknowledged leader of his party in his State. Both had made the broad prairie of the West their permanent home. They had served together in the Illinois legislature many years before, and since then had been personal friends. They had attended the same horse-races, eaten at the same table, and, it is said, had loved the same maiden. They were both honest, fearless, able, and keenly ambitious to rise in public life. Both were sanguine, jovial, and companionable; and each possessed the rare quality of winning a large circle of friends.

These two political gladiators now stood upon the same platform in the summer and autumn of 1858, and addressed the same audience in seven different Illinois towns, on the most

momentous question that ever disturbed the harmony of the Republic; two years later they were to stand at the head of their respective parties and ask the suffrages of their countrymen for the highest office in their power to bestow.

But the points of difference between Lincoln and Douglas are more marked than their points of resemblance. Douglas was low in stature, compactly built, and his voice was that of the trained orator; Lincoln was tall and awkward in appearance, his voice was rather high-pitched and unpleasant. Douglas was bold and defiant in style, fluent in speech, severe in denunciation; Lincoln possessed the power of putting his thoughts in a terse, simple, epigrammatic form, so logical that even his great opponent with all his powers of casuistry could not escape their force. Douglas had reached the zenith of his power, and for four years past had held his lofty position amid adverse political winds only by his marvellous courage and fortitude; Lincoln was just emerging from comparative obscurity, and was soon to surpass his antagonist and become the leading American of his time.

Both men were among the greatest public characters that our free institutions have produced. The time, moreover, of their coming together was portentous. It was a time when the forces of slavery and freedom had grappled in a deadly struggle for supremacy in the Government. Considering the standing of the rivals about to engage in this debate, the time of their meeting, and the universal interest in the subject to be discussed, there is no wonder that the eyes of the whole country were turned for a season toward the prairie State.

Preliminaries

Stephen A. Douglas had been for several years the foremost leader of his party, and his party had full control of the Government. His popularity had suffered severe reverses throughout the North, it is true, on account of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill; but he had largely regained his former prestige by the brave stand he took later on the affairs in Kansas.

The trouble in Kansas arose from an attempt to put into operation the provisions of the Kansas-Nebraska Act in that Territory. The

South was exceedingly anxious to gain another slave State so as to restore its power in the United States Senate, which had been broken by the admission of California as a free State. The slaveholders, therefore, determined to make Kansas their prize, and the proslavery party from Missouri poured into the Territory in large numbers with the intent of carrying the elections and making Kansas a slave State. But the northern people were on the alert. Bands of emigrants came from all sections of the North, with an equal determination to make Kansas a free State. The two parties came together, and there was fierce conflict resulting in much bloodshed.

This border warfare, as it was called, continued for several years, and was the most annoying of all public questions at the time when Mr. Buchanan became President in 1857. President Buchanan was very anxious to settle the matter without offending either side; but his sympathies were obviously with the South. He prevailed on Mr. Robert J. Walker, of Mississippi, who had been a member of President Polk's cabinet, to accept the governorship of

Kansas, and pledged him the support of the administration in securing justice for that much disturbed Territory.

Mr. Walker was a slaveholder, and his sympathies were with the South; but he was an honest man, and his sincere desire was to deal justice to both sides. But scarcely had he reached Kansas when he found that the proslavery party was carrying things with a high hand. A proslavery legislature, elected by fraud,[1] met at Lecompton and framed the famous Lecompton Constitution, making Kansas a slave State without honestly submitting the matter to a vote of the people. The honest soul of Governor Walker revolted against such proceedings, and he openly opposed the work of the legislature.

President Buchanan had promised to sustain Walker; but from some cause, probably the influence of certain members of his cabinet, he now abandoned his friend, and decided to

[1] Oxford, Johnson County, returned 1628 votes. It was found to be a village of but six houses. The names had been copied from a Cincinnati directory. Many precincts showed similar false returns See Nicolay and Hay, Vol. II. p. 105.

recommend the Lecompton Constitution to Congress in his annual message in December Walker was mortified and chagrined at this action of the President, and, like his three unfortunate predecessors, he resigned the governorship and retired to private life.

But President Buchanan had an obstacle to encounter that was beyond his power to overcome. He had a greater man than Governor Walker to deal with, and that was Stephen A. Douglas. A few days before the opening of Congress, Douglas called on the President and protested against his recommending the Lecompton Constitution, without first submitting it to a vote of the people of Kansas. Buchanan warned Douglas not to interfere, nor to oppose the administration, or he might soon find his political career at an end. But Douglas with great courage and with great power denounced the fraudulent Lecompton Constitution in the Senate; and the result was the defeat of the President, not in the Senate, but in the House.

Thus Douglas regained a large part of his lost popularity in the North, but in so doing he

sacrificed much of his newly won laurels in the South, besides making a permanent political enemy of President Buchanan.

The Republican newspapers praised him for his bold stand for justice and fair play in Kansas, while some of the Democratic papers abused him without mercy.

Douglas's third senatorial term was drawing to a close, and the election of the Illinois legislature in the autumn of 1858 must determine who should be his successor. Some of the leading Republican papers, including the *New York Tribune*, now advocated the reëlection of Douglas on the ground that he would continue the fight with the administration and split the Democratic party.

Horace Greeley of New York and Senator Crittenden of Kentucky urged the Illinois Republicans not to oppose the election of the Democratic senator; but with this request they refused to comply. Many of the Republicans of Illinois had been old line Whigs; Douglas had been their chief opponent for a generation, and now they found it impossible to overcome their old prejudices and assist in sending him

back to the Senate, and hence they produced their own candidate in the person of Abraham Lincoln.

The Challenge

The Republican State convention met at Springfield, Illinois, in June, 1858, and nominated Abraham Lincoln as their first and only choice for United States senator. Lincoln was then called for, and he rose to speak amid the greatest enthusiasm. The speech that he now made was one of the most logical ever delivered on the all-important subject of slavery, and in it he made the statement that afterward gave him National fame.

"A house divided against itself," he said, "cannot stand. I believe this Government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved, I do not expect the house to fall, but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing or all the other." This expression was far in advance of public opinion even in the newly founded Republican party. Before delivering this speech Lincoln had read

it to the party managers, and they all save one disapproved it, and urged that the above expression be omitted. Lincoln's heroic answer was: "If it is decreed that I should go down because of this speech, then let me go down linked with the truth — let me die in the advocacy of what is just and right. . . . I would rather be defeated with this expression in the speech, than be victorious without it." [1]

In reference to the attempt of the eastern Republicans to have Douglas sent back to the Senate, Lincoln said in the same speech, "They remind us that he is a great man and that the largest of us are very small ones. Let this be granted. . . . How can he oppose the advance of slavery? He does not care anything about it. His avowed mission is impressing the public heart to care nothing about it. . . . Our cause, then, must be intrusted to and conducted by its own undoubted friends — those whose hands are free, whose hearts are in the work — who *do care* for the result.[2] . . .

[1] Rhodes, Vol. II. p. 315.

[2] Douglas had said in the Senate that he did not care if slavery in the Territories was voted down or voted up.

I wish not to misrepresent Judge Douglas's position, question his motives, or do aught that can be personally offensive to him. Whenever, if ever, he and we can come together on principle, so that our cause may have assistance from his great ability, I hope to have interposed no adventitious obstacle. But clearly, he is not with us — he does not pretend to be — he does not promise ever to be."

Lincoln was not ignorant of the greatness of the task he had undertaken. He well knew that he was scarcely known beyond the bounds of his own State, while his opponent enjoyed a National fame not equalled by that of any other man. He knew that the masses almost idolized the Little Giant, as Douglas was called, but that his own following was for the most part yet to be won.

But Lincoln was nevertheless anxious to arrange a series of joint debates in order that the two might speak from the same platform. This he thought would be the best way to bring the issue squarely before the people; he therefore decided to challenge Douglas to such a discussion. This was a bold move on the part of

Lincoln, for his opponent was the acknowledged champion public speaker in the United States. He had measured swords on the floor of the Senate with Seward, Chase, Corwin, Sumner, and many others, and had surpassed them all. Lincoln's proposal therefore proved not only that he had unbounded confidence in the justice of his cause, but also in his ability to present it.

On July the 24th he addressed a brief note to the Democratic candidate asking if it would be agreeable to him to arrange a series of joint debates before the same audiences. Douglas answered on the same day, stating that his dates had already been fixed for almost the entire campaign; but in order to accommodate his rival he was willing to arrange for one joint meeting in each congressional district, except the two in which they had both already spoken. It was agreed therefore that they speak from the same platform in seven different towns on dates beginning the 21st of August and ending the 15th of October.[1]

[1] The times and places of the seven debates are as follows: Ottawa, August 21; Freeport, August 27; Jonesboro, September

The announcement of this arrangement created much interest, not only in Illinois, but throughout the Union. Lincoln's party friends were at first alarmed. They knew of Douglas's marvellous power as an orator, his wonderful hold on the masses, and his unbroken successes from his youth up. But Lincoln had a clear advantage over his antagonist in several particulars. He represented a new and enthusiastic political party. He stood for freedom as against human bondage. He represented a new and more enlightened civilization, that was taking hold of the popular heart with irresistible power, while Douglas was obliged to defend the worn-out theories and ideals of a by-gone age. And, further, Lincoln's hands were unbound; he had nothing to lose. Douglas, on the other hand, was an aspirant to the presidency; and, while his speeches were addressed to the people of Illinois, he dared not forget that the whole South was hearing every word and watching every movement. The opposition which Lincoln had

15; Charleston, September 18; Galesburg, October 7; Quincy, October 13; Alton, October 15. — Lincoln-Douglas Debates, p. 66

encountered from the leaders of his own party in the East was more than balanced by the hostility of the Buchanan administration to Douglas. The two champions were, as before stated, personal friends. Lincoln had paid high tribute to the ability and success of his opponent; Douglas, in his opening speech of the campaign at Chicago, had referred to Lincoln as a "kind, genial, and honorable gentleman." He afterward paid tribute to Lincoln's ability by stating that in all his discussions at Washington he had never met an opponent who had given him so much trouble as Lincoln. "I have been in Congress sixteen years," said Douglas, "and there is not a man in the Senate I would not rather encounter in debate." [1]

It was agreed that the first speaker occupy an hour, the second an hour and a half, after which the first would close with half an hour, thus covering three hours in all. At their first meeting, in Ottawa, Douglas had the opening and closing. Lincoln had them at Freeport, and so on alternately to the close. The excite

[1] Lincoln-Douglas Debates, p. 340.

ment of the people rose to fever heat. The meetings were held in the open air, as no hall was large enough to hold the crowds that gathered.

Extracts

We shall not attempt to give even an outline of the speeches in this great contest. A few extracts will show the general trend of the argument. There was but one important subject treated by the contestants, and that was the slavery question, or rather the particular phase of it arising from the Kansas-Nebraska Bill and the Dred Scott Decision — the advance of slavery into the Territories. Douglas rang many changes on Lincoln's Springfield utterance that "A house divided against itself cannot stand," and its application to slavery in the United States. This doctrine, he claimed, instead of allaying the strife between the North and the South, would foster and encourage it until a war of sections would result.

Lincoln disclaimed all intention of inviting a war of sections; but reiterated his belief that

one side or the other would eventually become supreme throughout the country. "Is slavery wrong?" said Lincoln, "that is the real issue. That is the issue that shall continue in this country when these poor tongues of Judge Douglas and myself shall be silent. It is the eternal struggle between two principles — right and wrong — throughout the world. . . . The one is the common right of humanity and the other the divine right of kings. It is the same principle in whatever shape it develops itself. It is the same spirit that says: 'You work and toil, and earn bread, and I'll eat it.'"

Lincoln appealed again and again to that clause in the Declaration of Independence, "All men are created equal." "This," he insisted, "meant all men, and not simply all white men, — created equal," not in mental endowments nor in worldly station, but in their natural rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. "I agree with Judge Douglas," said he, "that the negro is not my equal in many respects . but in the right to eat the bread, without the leave of anybody else, which his own hand earns, he is my equal,

and the equal of Judge Douglas, and the equal of every living man." His most eloquent apostrophe to the Declaration of Independence had been uttered early in August at Beardstown. The speech closed with the following words:—

"You may do anything with me you choose, if you will but heed these sacred principles. You may not only defeat me for the Senate, but you may take me and put me to death. While pretending no indifference to earthly honors, I do claim to be actuated in this contest by something higher than an anxiety for office. I charge you to drop every paltry and insignificant thought for any man's success. It is nothing; I am nothing; Judge Douglas is nothing. But do not destroy that immortal emblem of humanity — the Declaration of American Independence."

To Douglas's frequent assertion that the fathers who framed the Constitution were content to let slavery alone, but that Lincoln only increased the agitation by taking the stand he did, the latter replied, "There is no way of putting an end to the slavery agitation amongst

us but to put it back upon the basis where our fathers placed it, — no way but to keep it out of our Territories — to restrict it forever to the old States where it now exists. Then the public mind *will* rest in the belief that it is in the course of ultimate extinction."

Douglas lauded "Popular Sovereignty" as embodied in his Kansas-Nebraska Bill. Lincoln quaintly answered that the logical meaning of that was that "if one man chooses to enslave another, no third man has a right to object." The substance of Lincoln's argument from first to last was that slavery is wrong, and its spread should be arrested. He was not an abolitionist, nor did he wish to interfere with the institution in any State where it existed; but he held that, since slavery was an evil in itself, and was constantly menacing the peace of the country, it should be prohibited by Congress from all the Territories, and thus put in the way of ultimate extinction. Douglas, on the other hand, professed to be entirely indifferent on the subject of slavery. He did not care if it was voted up or voted down. If the Territories desired to have slavery, they

had a right to it, and Congress had no right to interfere. This doctrine became popularly known as "Squatter Sovereignty."

The Freeport Doctrine

Senator Douglas was a man of wonderful resources. His capacity to rise above political adversity was extraordinary. Many believed that his fathering the Kansas-Nebraska Bill would end his political life; but with remarkable exuberance he rose above popular clamor, and in a few years he had again become the favorite idol. But it remained for this notable debate with Lincoln to deal the Little Giant a blow from which he could not recover.

At the first joint meeting, at Ottawa, Douglas propounded to Lincoln several important questions bearing on the subject under discussion. This was a fatal mistake on the part of Douglas, as he soon discovered. Mr. Lincoln evaded giving direct answers at the time, saying, however, that he would do so on condition that Douglas would answer an equal number of interrogatories propounded by him.

Six days later they met for their second discussion, at Freeport. Lincoln, on rising to speak, answered his opponent's questions *seriatim*. He then read a series of questions that he had framed, and called upon Douglas to make answer before the audience as he had done. The second of these, as follows, was the fatal one: "Can the people of a United States Territory, in any lawful way, against the wish of any citizen of the United States, exclude slavery from its limits, prior to the formation of a State constitution?"

It is necessary to explain here that the clause in the Kansas-Nebraska Bill which dealt with this point was equivocal, and it received a very different interpretation north and south of Mason and Dixon's line. In the South it was interpreted to mean that, as the Constitution recognized the right of property in slaves, the Government was bound to protect it, as any other property, in all public lands, including the Territories. The Territory, therefore, had no voice in the matter until it became a State. It was like a child not yet of age, the National Government being the

parent, and having full control until the forme. reached its majority, that is, statehood.

In the North the clause was held to mean that a Territory had the power, at any time, to exclude slavery from its bounds by a vote of the people. The Dred Scott Decision clearly favored the southern view. With this explanation the depth of Lincoln's question will readily be seen.

Douglas was thus placed in the most trying position of his life. An avowed candidate for the presidency, it was absolutely necessary for him to retain or win the favor of both the great sections of the country; but now he is forced to stand before a public audience (and that audience included the whole United States) and give his views on the one great question on which the North and the South were at that moment at variance. But there was no escape. He had begun the catechising process; and to refuse to answer Lincoln's questions now would have been cowardly, and would have arrayed public feeling against him. It was generally supposed that he would answer the question in accordance with northern

sentiment. The Republican leaders, who knew of Lincoln's intention to put this question to his opponent, greatly feared that Douglas would answer according to northern feeling, and thus win the senatorship. A number of them, it is said, sought Lincoln at his hotel late on the night before the Freeport meeting, invaded his sleeping-room, and urged him not to put the interrogatory to Douglas. But Lincoln persisted, and they cried out, "If you do, you can never be senator." "Gentlemen," replied Lincoln, "I am after larger game; if Douglas answers as you say he will he can never be President, and the battle of 1860 is worth a hundred of this."

The day came, and Douglas, after Lincoln's opening speech, rose to make reply. His answer to the all-important question was, as was generally expected, in accordance with the northern view. He explained that the people of a Territory could introduce or exclude slavery, as they pleased, for the reason that the institution could not exist anywhere for a day unless supported by local police regulations — that if the people are opposed

to the institution they could prevent its introduction by unfriendly legislation. The theory thus put forth was not only at variance with the doctrine held throughout the South, but it openly contradicted the Dred Scott Decision, which permitted the slaveholder to carry his human property into the Territories without hindrance.

This opinion of Douglas soon became known as the "Freeport Doctrine." It was taken up and discussed by all the leading newspapers in the United States. Many of them scored the author without mercy. But the most scathing criticism he received was from Lincoln, who in his subsequent speeches showed with pitiless logic how inconsistent was this opinion with the Dred Scott Decision, which Douglas professed to accept as sound Democratic doctrine.

The Result

The immediate result of the Lincoln-Douglas debates was a victory for Douglas. He was reëlected to the Senate by a narrow majority, though the Republicans had a majority

of the popular vote. This apparent contradiction arose from the unfair apportionment of the legislative districts, and from the fact that of the twelve hold-over senators eight were Democrats.

But the immediate result of the senatorial election was of little importance compared with the vaster results that soon followed. In fact this great debate proved to be the turning-point in the political life of both the contestants. From this time forth their fortunes moved rapidly, but, like Pharaoh's chief butler and chief baker, in opposite directions. The return of Douglas to the Senate seemed to give him the victor's palm, but, in the light of subsequent events, the world must render a different verdict. This was the last victory of Douglas. His Freeport Doctrine was deeply offensive to the whole South and to some of the leading men of his party at the North. His Lecompton revolt was a venial offence compared with this.[1] He found himself wholly out of fellowship with a large portion of his party, and all hope of a recon-

[1] Nicolay and Hay, Vol. II. p. 163.

ciliation was at an end. Two years later when the party met in national convention to nominate a candidate for the presidency, the naming of Douglas by the northern delegates caused a revolt from those of the South, who, naming their own candidate, thus rendered the party an easy prey to its great and newly formed antagonist.

The most important single result of this joint debate was what it did for Abraham Lincoln. The discussion at first attracted National attention only because of Douglas's connection with it — Douglas, the man without a peer in the United States Senate, the restless, ambitious soul who had stirred up such strife four years before in the National capital. But ere long the people saw that a greater than Douglas was upon the scene; they beheld in the political firmament a still brighter star rising from the prairied West! Lincoln s reputation from this time was National. His speeches, read from one end of the land to the other, were found to be the fullest, clearest, and most logical statement of Republican doctrine to be found anywhere

He was henceforth acknowledged to be the foremost man in his party, with the possible exception of Seward of New York; and two years later, at the National convention, when it was found that the great New Yorker could not be nominated, Lincoln became the logical candidate for the presidency. With his success at the polls, his subsequent success during the greatest crisis through which our country has passed, and with his greatness as President of the United States, every reader is familiar.

It remains to say a word about his defeated opponent. Douglas bore his defeat in 1860 most manfully; and the contribution he made toward preserving the Union in the great conflict that followed was neither trifling nor small. If there was one man in the country, in 1861, who could have compassed the destruction of the Government, that man was Stephen A. Douglas. The Republican party alone could not have won in the gigantic struggle, nor prevented the final dissolution of the Union. Nearly a million northern Democrats looked to Douglas as their political

oracle. His creed was their creed, his loyalty, their loyalty. Douglas, knowing this, did not hesitate to cast his lot on the side of the Union. He called on President Lincoln soon after the inauguration, and proffered his services in any way in which he might be useful. The report of this interview, published throughout the North, had a powerful effect in determining the attitude of Douglas's followers. Lincoln was greatly pleased with Douglas's action, and it is believed would have appointed him to some high position of honor, had his life been spared; but in June of the same year Douglas was called on to pay the final debt of Nature, and he was gathered unto his fathers.

CHAPTER XVII

History of Political Parties

A complete history of the political parties that have existed and still exist in the United States would be a history of the entire working of our Government from the beginning. No such pretensions are made for this brief chapter. We can only notice the general tendencies of each party and the main points of difference between them, citing an occasional historical fact as an illustration. The many minor political organizations which did not get control of the Government must be omitted. The period covered will be the same as that from which the other chapters of this volume have been drawn, closing with the beginning of the Civil War.

In a government such as ours it is necessary that the citizens be divided into two or more political parties, as no party, however

pure its motives at first, will rule the country long without becoming corrupt, unless it has a rival of almost equal strength, scrutinizing its acts and motives, and ready to snatch from it the reins of Government.

In our more than a century of National life there have been four political parties that reached such magnitude and power as to get control of the Government, namely, the Federal, the Democratic, the Whig, and the Republican parties. Of these, two have run their course and passed into history, while the other two still exist and constitute the great political forces of the Nation, measuring their strength from time to time with ever varying success. Of these four great organizations three have stood in a great measure for the same thing, no two existing at the same time, one following another as its natural heir and successor. The fourth, on the other hand, has been the natural and only formidable opponent of the other three, has been contemporary with them all, and has existed more than twice as long as the next oldest. All of these parties have stood for some great and noble principles in

human government, a fact that many zealous partisans overlook. It is true that it is our right, and not only our right, but our duty, to criticise and oppose corruptions in politics. The American public should ever be awake to the doings of its lawmakers, and that there is much to find fault with none will deny; but it is nevertheless true that in criticising the corruptions in politics, we are apt to overlook the abiding principles of right which underlie our political life.

The Earliest Political Parties

During the colonial period there were no political parties in America. There was some difference, it is true, in political opinion, a portion of the people adhering to the prerogative of the King without questioning, while others, with less reverence for their sovereign, were ever vigilant in guarding their own liberties. During the Revolutionary period there were no organized political parties, but the people were divided into two unorganized masses known as Whigs and Tories, the former comprising the fighting patriots, and the latter

the loyalists, who opposed the war. These names, both borrowed from English politics, were first used in America about 1770.

At the close of the war many of the loyalists fled, some to England, others to Canada, while still others remained in the country and became reconciled to the new form of government. The party names were dropped, and for several years there was no special political distinction among the people.

When the Constitution was framed and put before the people for their approval, a large portion of them opposed its adoption. A majority, however, favored it, and eventually secured its ratification in all the States.[1] Those who favored the Federal Government as created by the new Constitution styled themselves Federalists; those opposing were called Anti-Federalists. But the Anti-Federalists were never an organized party, nor did they acknowledge the name, which had been put upon them by their enemies. After the adoption of the Constitution this party, if such it can be called, fell to pieces, while the

[1] See Chapter II.

Federal party took control of the Government.

The Federal Party

The political party that came into control of the Government in 1789 remained in power for twelve years. It differed from all its successors in being more centralizing and less in sympathy with the masses of the people than any other. Its leaders believed that the wealthy and cultured classes should rule the country, and they had little faith in the ability of the masses to govern themselves. The tendency of the party was to centralize the power into the hands of a few, and to make the National Government strong at the expense of the States.[1]

But the people were jealous of their liberties; they had learned to love their respective States while still colonies; but the National Government was a new thing, and there was a general fear that it would become tyrannical, as England had been in the past. It was not long after the first administration had begun when a

[1] See Chapter IV.

large portion of the people began to show signs of discontent with the monarchial tendency of the Government, as they called it, and the result was, an opposing political party came into being. The leader of this movement was Thomas Jefferson, President Washington's secretary of state. This new movement first assumed the dignity of a political party about 1793; it steadily increased in popular favor until the end of the century, when it gained control of the Government.

The great leader of the Federal Party was Alexander Hamilton, and as he and Jefferson were both in the cabinet of Washington, their constant wrangles made it very unpleasant for the latter. Washington was supposed to be above party lines, but it was known that his sympathies were with Hamilton rather than with Jefferson. The Jefferson party, however, supported Washington for a second term, and his second election was unanimous, as the first had been. Washington's commanding presence held party spirit in check during the eight years of his presidency; but on his retirement the two opposing parties took the field for a royal

battle for supremacy. The presidential contest in 1796 was a vigorous one, and John Adams won the prize over Jefferson by the narrow margin of three votes in the electoral college. Four years later Jefferson defeated Adams by a majority of eight. Thus fell the first great political party in the United States, and it fell to rise no more. After the great defeat of 1800, the Federal party grew weaker and weaker until about 1816, when it utterly disappeared from American politics.

The Federal party, with all its aristocratic tendencies, embodied much that is noble and of permanent value in human government. It did the country a great service, and was necessary at the time to save the new-born republic from anarchy. It had adopted the Constitution, had become the first pilot of the new Ship of State, and had guided the ship successfully for twelve years. To President Washington we owe our attitude of non-interference in European affairs, and the courage required to take that stand was equal to that of the patriots at Bunker Hill. The financial basis of our Government to-day may be traced back unti

its roots are found in the brain of the great Federal leader, Alexander Hamilton. These are the abiding monuments of the Federal party.

But with all its excellences, the party was never popular. Only once after the rise of the Jefferson party did the Federalists command a majority in both Houses of Congress, and that was occasioned by the stimulus of impending war with France under John Adams. It then committed the unpardonable sin in passing the Alien and Sedition Laws, and the sovereign people sat in judgment and passed upon it the sentence of death. But it was not the unpopular laws that caused its overthrow; these were but the occasion. The true cause lay deeper. The vital defect in the party was its distrust of popular government — its want of confidence in the people. As Henry Adams says, "The party represented the ideals of a bygone age." But a new century had dawned, and brought with it new ideals with which the old party was unable to grapple, and its fall was inevitable.

But truth cannot die. The truth, therefore

embodied in old Federal doctrine did not die. Not only did the rival party that defeated the Federalists gradually adopt their best principles, but every political party in America, from that time to the present, has done the same thing. The old Federal party, therefore, still lives in its successors — just as a corn of wheat that falls into the ground and dies lives again in the new plant that comes forth — and it deserves and will deserve the grateful remembrance of American citizens to the latest generations.

The Democratic Party

Thomas Jefferson, in founding a new political party, gave it the name of Republican, or National Republican, and he continued to designate the party by these names as long as he lived. But his enemies often called his followers Democrats in derision, after a little party in France, held in disrepute at the time. The name Democratic steadily gained in favor until, in 1828, it was finally adopted as the official party name. We shall employ the term Democratic to designate the party of

Jefferson, though it was not officially so used during the lifetime of its founder.

The difference between the Federal and Democratic parties lay chiefly in the fact that the former was unfriendly to popular government and believed in a loose construction of the Constitution; while the latter advocated the largest possible share in the Government by the common people, and believed in a strict construction of the Constitution. By loose construction is meant the tendency to construe the Constitution, not always literally, but liberally, and thus give larger powers to Congress. The strict constructionists, on the other hand, would allow the National Government only such powers as are expressly granted by the Constitution, reserving all others to the States or to the people. But the Democratic party, after coming into full control, found it impossible to carry out literally its ideas of strict construction. When the opportunity to purchase Louisiana offered, Jefferson entered into the contract, though the Constitution gave no such warrant. The party was forced, owing to the strained relations with France and

England, to adopt from time to time the very measures against which it had fought in old Federal days. This did not necessarily indicate a change of policy, but only a rising to an emergency, an adjusting of its sails with the veering of the wind. The Federal party, lacking this ability to adjust itself to new conditions, had found itself out of tune with the times, and its downfall was the necessary result.

When the Federal party ceased to be a factor in National politics, the Democrats had their own way for a long period. At Jefferson's second election there were but fourteen electoral votes cast against him. The opposition to Madison was somewhat greater, and in 1816 there still remained a weak resistance to Monroe's election; but at the close of Monroe's first term all opposition had died out, and his second election was practically unanimous.[1]

In 1824 there were no opposing political organizations; but the Democratic party was divided into factions, each with its chosen

[1] See Chapter IX.

leader. Four candidates for the presidency were early in the field — John Quincy Adams, Henry Clay, John C. Calhoun, and William H. Crawford. All of these belonged to the Democratic party, and each had a following that claimed to represent the true democracy. Later in the campaign another star was added to the constellation in the person of Andrew Jackson; but Calhoun soon dropped out, and the number was again four.

When the electoral college met Calhoun was elected Vice-President, but there was no election of President, Jackson receiving the highest number of votes, ninety-nine, Adams coming next with eighty-four, while Crawford received forty-one, and Clay thirty-seven. The election was thus thrown into the House, where Adams was elected on the first ballot. In 1828 Jackson and Adams were the candidates, the former using the name Democratic, while the Adams following retained the old Jeffersonian name, National Republican.

Four years later, when Clay ran against Jackson, the same party names were used. But Clay, whose party policy was altogether unlike

that of Jackson, and having a large following, both in Congress and among the masses, now determined to break away from the old party and to organize a new one. Hence the Whig party was born, the name being first used in 1834. For twenty years from this date the Democratic party had a great rival, strong enough at times to take from it the control of the Government.

When the Whig party disappeared in the early fifties, the Democrats again had a monopoly of National affairs. Their powerful hold on the country seemed to promise another long lease of power; but the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill and the series of disasters that followed in its train brought about a political revolution, and deprived the party of National control for a quarter of a century. The wonder is that it ever recovered. That the Democratic party survived its decade of experience beginning with 1854 is one of the marvels of the century. The slaveholders were dominant in the party's councils at the time when the spirit of the age pointed so plainly to a new order of things. This spirit they resisted to the last —

until utterly defeated by force of arms. It is not true that the Democratic party as such waged war on the Union in defence of slavery; but it is true that the slaveholders had practical control of the party for some years before the war. But the war over and slavery overthrown, the party, with that wonderful capacity to adapt itself to new conditions, as shown sixty years before, accepted the results of the war, and was soon a formidable rival of the dominant Republican party.

The work of the Democratic party in making our great country what it is can scarcely be estimated. To it we are indebted for the acquisition of every State and Territory beyond the Mississippi River, and for Florida — more than half of our National domain. To it we owe the Independent Treasury, and the destruction of the United States Bank, which, had it remained to this day, would doubtless have eaten the very vitals of our political system.

Many are the blunders this party has made and numerous its errors; but to assert that the party does not rest on true and sound principles of government is to impute to a vast

number of American citizens during a century of our history either unpardonable insincerity or gross stupidity.

The Whig Party

When Henry Clay and his friends were casting about for a party name, the old Revolutionary name "Whig" was suggested and adopted. The Whig party may be called the posthumous child of the old Federal party, and it stood for the same principles in a somewhat modified degree. During the entire twenty years of the life of the Whig party it had but one rival, and that was the Democratic party, and it differed from the latter in being more paternal and centralizing in its tendencies.

The Whig party differed from the other three in that it has not left us one great legislative act to enrich our National life, nor to embalm its name in American history. The party was patriotic, but unfortunate; it was rent by foes without and greater foes within. It twice elected a President, but each died in office before his term was half finished

During the whole period of the existence of the Whig party it was beaten by the Democrats in all its great measures.[1] The first great contest between the Whigs and Democrats was that concerning the United States Bank. The Whigs favored granting it a new charter and perpetuating its existence indefinitely, while the Democrats opposed this on the ground that so great a monopoly, which had practical control of the finances of the entire Nation, would surely become corrupt, would control the elections, and subvert the liberties of the people. The Democratic party appealed to the people on this ground, were successful, and the bank was destroyed.

The Whigs favored expending the surplus in the treasury from time to time in internal improvements, such as canals, turnpikes, and National roads. The Democrats claimed that such improvements could benefit only those who lived near them, that each State should make its own improvements, and that to tax the whole people for the benefit of the few was repugnant to the spirit of democracy. In this

[1] Schouler, Vol. IV. p. 261.

also the Whigs were defeated. So also with the Independent Treasury. The Whigs opposed it with all their power; but it became a law, and the people came to see that it was a good thing. The Whig party was therefore correspondingly weakened for having opposed it. Thus it will be seen the chief differences between these two parties were similar to those that had existed between the Federal and the Democratic parties forty years before.

The Whig party inflicted a suicidal blow upon itself in passing the Omnibus Bill of 1850. The party might have survived this, as the Democratic party afterward survived still heavier blows, but for the fact that it had been greatly weakened by the loss of all its important and distinctive measures since its organization. Every defeat now became an open wound, through which the life-blood of the party was ebbing. Two years later the party received its final blow in the crushing defeat of General Scott for the presidency, and for the second and last time thus far in American history a great political party passed out of existence.

The Republican Party

Even in quiet times it is not possible for a country governed by the people to be long without opposing political parties. Much less possible would this be in such troublous times as those just preceding the Civil War. The monopoly in National affairs enjoyed by the Democratic party could not long continue, especially after it had offended a large portion of the people with the Kansas-Nebraska Bill. Scarcely had the pending bill become known to the public when the unrest of the people began to manifest itself, and rumors were soon afloat of the formation of a new national party. There was much unorganized material with which to form a party.

The Democratic party had, at the death of the Federal party, absorbed almost the whole people, but this was not true at the dissolution of the Whig party. The old line Whigs for the most part refused to affiliate with the Democrats. The same was true of the American or Know-Nothing party, which was now on the verge of dissolution. To these must be

added the many thousands of anti-Nebraska Democrats. These three elements found themselves on common ground in opposing the future encroachment of the slave-power on free soil; and they were not long in forming a coalition to found a great political party.

There is a little town in Wisconsin, Ripon, in Fond du Lac County, which claims to be the birthplace of the new party. At a meeting of the citizens held on March 20, 1854, a series of resolutions were passed declaring that a new national political party should be organized and that its name should be "Republican." A full report of the meeting, written by the chairman, was published by Mr. Greeley in the *New York Tribune*. This little meeting is perhaps the remotest rivulet from which the great stream of Republicanism took its rise. A similar movement followed a few days later in Vermont. A great meeting was held in Michigan early in July, and the resolutions here adopted were similar to those adopted in the Wisconsin town. Ohio followed a week later in a similar demonstration; and the following year Chase carried that State for governor on an anti

Nebraska ticket by a majority of seventy-five thousand. Before the close of 1855 nearly all the northern States had shown, through their elections, their profound disapproval of the policy of the Democratic party.

It was left for Pittsburg to become the official birthplace of the Republican party. On Washington's birthday, 1856, a meeting was held in this city to lay the foundations of a new national party. Every northern State was represented except California. The name adopted for the new party was "Republican." The distinctive principle on which it was founded was, No further advance of slavery on free soil. This Pittsburg meeting called a National convention to be held in Philadelphia the following June for the purpose of naming candidates for the coming presidential election.

The convention was held in Philadelphia as appointed, and John C. Frémont and William L. Dayton were nominated for the presidency and vice-presidency. The Republican candidates were defeated at the polls, but they carried all the northern States except four, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Indiana, and Illinois

This was a wonderful showing for the new party, and four years later it swept the entire North and gained control of the Government through the greatest political revolution in our history.

The Republican party was not at first an abolition party. It became such only after the issue was forced upon it through the exigencies of war. Aside from the issues brought on by the war and its causes, there was no great difference between the Republican and Democratic parties. The reduction of the tariff in 1857 was the joint action of both parties, and the tariff did not become a prominent issue between them until more than twenty years later.

As was the case with the Whig party, the Republican party is somewhat more centralizing and paternal in its tendencies than the Democratic party, but these features were scarcely noticeable before the war. If the Whig party was the child, the Republican party may be called the grandchild, of the old Federal party. The difference, however, between the original Democrats and the Federalists was

much greater than between the present Democrats and Republicans. Experience has taught the Democrats to lay more stress on nationality, and the opposition to become more democratic. The movement of each has been toward the other, resulting in a narrowing of the gap between them.

Both parties at the beginning of the century were idealists and extremists. One of them committed suicide by refusing to discern the signs of the times and to modify its policy as necessity demanded; the other, more wise and more practical, modified its ideals as the changing conditions required, and it has thus preserved its organization down through the century to the present time. The Whig Party showed the same want of foresight and adaptability that had characterized its predecessor, and the result was the same. But the Republican party has thus far shown itself capable of grappling with all sorts of public questions, and its outlook for permanent existence is not less promising than that of its great rival.

The history of the Republican party covers, for the most part, a period subsequent to that

treated in this volume. The party has done much that is of permanent value in our Government. Many of its acts will ever be remembered, one of which marks an era in our history, and in the onward march of civilization, one that will stand for all time as a monument of unfading glory to the party that achieved it, and that is the final and permanent overthrow of human slavery in America.

CHAPTER XVIII

Relation of the States to the Nation

In the United States every citizen has two patriotisms, two loyalties — one to the United States as a nation, the other to the State in which he resides. He lives under two governments, or rather two complementary parts of one great system, the National and the State, and is subject to two sets of laws, blended, however, into one whole. To us it is an easy matter to adjust our twofold patriotism between the Nation and the State, because a century of experience has settled the question for us. We need only to fall in with the prevalent feeling of the masses, to join the great current of American thought, and there is little of personal effort left for us.

But a hundred years ago it was very different. Then it was that there were constant quarrels in Congress on the relation of the States to the Union, that any State would

threaten to secede for some real or imagined wrong, that the wisest statesmen often solemnly predicted that the Union would not stand half a century. No wonder if the common citizen found it difficult to arrange in his own mind this twofold allegiance, while now there is scarcely more conscious effort required than for a child to love both its parents without partiality.

The union of our Nation with the States is a wonderful combination. Nothing like it ever before existed in ancient or modern times. There are still some who belittle the States and look upon the National Government as everything; there are others, a smaller number perhaps, who still pay homage to that old mouldering corpse — State Sovereignty. Both are equally in error. It is true, if we had to choose between the two, we would give our first allegiance to the Nation, and not to the State. This is the normal condition of every unbiassed American citizen. At the same time let it not be forgotten that one of the greatest bulwarks of our liberty is found in States' Rights, as will be shown later.

Our National Government and the separate State governments have been blended in such a way as to preserve the integrity of each, so that National laws and State laws, however much they intermingle, do not conflict, but work in one grand harmony. Our States are to the Nation, as Mr. Brice puts it, like smaller wheels revolving within the circumference of a greater wheel; each is supreme within its own sphere, neither encroaching upon the domain of the other.

Origin of the States and of the Union

In order to get a better view of this union of States and Nation and their mutual relations, let us glance briefly at the origin of both. In one sense the States (I speak of the original thirteen only) are older than the Nation. They had their origin as colonies, under British rule, and the oldest had existed nearly two centuries before the Union was formed. The colonies were closely related — same race for the most part, same language, aims, history, literature; but their only political bond was through England. They were

wholly separate and had nothing to do with each other in matters of government. Indeed, their governments were quite unlike, some were royal colonies, some chartered, some proprietary. No union whatever existed during this period, except that of four New England colonies for a brief period. But in another sense the Union is older than the States. This was shown with much force by President Lincoln in his message to Congress in 1861, when arguing against the right of secession. The colonies before the Revolution were not States, but simply parts of the British Empire. It was not until 1776 that the newly formed Union, acting through the Continental Congress, declared the colonies absolved from their British allegiance, and erected them into States. Before this they were dependent colonies, like children not yet of age; now they became self-governing States only by the action of the Union: hence the Union is older than the States.

But priority of birth has little to do with the subject before us. Since the right of secession has been decided in the negative by the

outcome of the Civil War, this is a matter of speculation rather than of practical politics The kind of union to be formed was the great question that troubled our forefathers; for it was plain to be seen that the Union hastily formed at the beginning of the Revolution could not be permanent. Accordingly, in 1781, near the close of the war, the new-formed States adopted a Constitution previously framed by Congress, and known as "The Articles of Confederation." This constitution was very defective;[1] the most serious defect was, perhaps, that the General Government could act only on a State and not upon the individual, and thus Congress was rendered powerless to enforce any National law, nor had it power to put into operation its treaties with foreign nations. It could only recommend to the States as States, and if they chose to disregard its acts, as many of them did, there was no power to force them. A government that cannot enforce its own laws is no government at all.

The Articles of the Confederation had been in force but few years when the state of the

[1] See Chapter II.

country became most deplorable. The States quarrelled with one another, laid tax on each other's merchandise, and habitually disregarded the laws of Congress. Yet the experience during this period was wholesome, for it taught the people, as nothing else could, that a strong central government was absolutely necessary. And a better government came. The Convention of 1787 at Philadelphia framed a Constitution which, with the fifteen amendments subsequently adopted, is still the supreme law of the land. With these introductory statements we proceed to our subject, the relation of the Union formed by the Constitution to the States that compose that Union.

The Three Kinds of Government

Governments may be divided for our present purpose into three kinds, the Consolidated, the Federal, and the Confederate. The Consolidated Government may be compared to an organism, a living body, in which every part is essential to every other part. There is a central life-giving power, the heart, from which flows the life-blood to every member of the

body, and no part can live without a constant supply from this fountain. So with a unified, consolidated government; there is a central, all-powerful authority from which proceeds the entire governing force of the nation. All subdivisions of territory are but agents to carry out the dictates of the central authority. All public officials down to the village mayor and the justice of the peace act under this same authority. Such governments are usually monarchies, but Republican France must be numbered among them. Our own State governments are also of this class. The counties, townships, and city corporations are but agents of the State and created by it. All county, city, and township officers, though elected by the people, hold their commissions by the authority of the State constitution and legislature.

The second of these three classes is the Federal government. This may be likened to a large building with separate compartments, each with its own industry — mercantile, manufacturing, and the like — but all under the same roof and within the same walls. Such a government is composed of states, or cantons, each

independent in its own sphere, but held together by the outer walls of the general government. The most conspicuous example now in existence is our own country.

The Confederate government is like a cluster of houses near together joined in a league for mutual protection and benefit, but each still independent and at liberty to withdraw from the league at its pleasure.[1] A Confederate government has never yet been successful. One of the most notable examples in history is our own country after the Revolution and before the adoption of our present Constitution. Switzerland was such a country until 1848.

Thus it will be seen that the character of our Government was changed by the Constitution. Its adoption wrought a political revolution. Before that it was a confederate government; since then a federal government. Some of the framers of the Constitution were in favor of abolishing the States, obliterating State lines, and forming one compact, consolidated government. Others, and

[1] These figures I have enlarged upon, receiving the suggestion from Goldwin Smith.

a greater number, favored leaving all real power with the States, and making the General Government simply an agent to take charge of general matters, especially foreign affairs. The result was a compromise between the two.

The Constitution is the bond that unites the several States to the Nation, *i.e.* to the people of all the States. In the people taken collectively resides sovereignty, therefore the Nation is sovereign, because composed of the whole people. The States are not sovereign, because some of the necessary prerogatives of sovereignty are denied them.

National and State Laws

The people of the States, in thus surrendering some of their powers to the General Government, by no means surrendered all, but only those which affect the whole people or the people of more than one State; all others are reserved to the States or to the people.

Most of the powers of the General Government are those which affect the whole people. It has sole power to wage war, to coin money,

and to make treaties with foreign nations. It regulates commerce with foreign nations and between the States, controls mail service, etc. These powers are the highest prerogatives of sovereignty, and no nation can be sovereign that does not possess them.

But withal the Nation is far away from the daily life of the citizen as compared with his State. We deal with the United States when we elect a President, or a member of Congress, when we mail a letter, or come in contact with the custom-house. We are reminded of the General Government by the stamp on a cigar-box or a beer-keg, and by the money we use; but in fact National law touches the common citizen in time of peace very slightly indeed. Nearly all the ordinary laws under which we live are State laws. All our laws of marriage and divorce, of inheritance, of partnerships and corporations, laws against crime (with a few exceptions), all laws concerning our social and business relations, are State laws. Our public school systems, our civil and religious rights, protection of our homes, all depend on State authority, and the National

Government has nothing to do with them. As President Garfield said, "The State Government touches the citizen twenty times where the National Government touches him once."

But the laws of the National Government, though fewer in number, are of a higher order than those of the State, and, like the nervous system in the human body, which extends to every point of the surface and centres in the brain, so our National system of laws extends over the entire country, penetrates to the remotest corners of the Union and they act on every citizen without regard to his allegiance to his State. These two sets of laws, the Federal and the State, form one vast dual system. They often intermingle, and overlap at many points, and, where they conflict, the State law must always give way. But in practice they seldom come in conflict, and the principal reason is this: Every State constitution ratifies the Federal Constitution and makes that instrument a part of itself, and the State officials, governor, legislators, judges, and county officers must take an oath to support and defend the National Constitution.

They are, therefore, in a remoter sense, United State officers as well as State officers, and under equal obligations to support both. Thus we readily see how the two sets of laws work in harmony, since they are executed in part by the same officials. While it is true a State is not sovereign, it is supreme within its own sphere even more so than the Federal Government.

National and State Authority

The governments of the Nation and of the State differ in two important respects. 1. The powers of the Nation are delegated powers, and did not exist before the Union was formed in 1789; while the powers of the State are inherent and date back to colonial times. 2. The Federal Government has no power beyond that which is given it in the Constitution, that which affects the whole people; while a State has absolute power over its own people and its own Territory, except, of course, that which is delegated to the Nation. It is true a State is forbidden a few things by the Federal Constitution, such as granting titles of nobility, passing *ex post facto* laws, adopting other than a repub

lican form of government, denying a man the right to vote on account of race or color, and the like; but aside from these and a few others a State has absolute control over its own affairs. If Pennsylvania, *e.g.*, chose to obliterate county and township lines, to abolish city charters and the public school system, to disfranchise a man on any ground whatever except race or color, or, indeed, to become a veritable tyrant, there is no power in the General Government to prevent it. The Nation could not interfere without violating its own Constitution. The State is absolute master of its own affairs. When we say that the States are subordinate to the Nation, we do not mean that they can be commanded by it, but simply that they are less national in their functions. States' Rights are as sacred and inviolable as National rights; and the Nation has no more authority to overthrow the State governments or to encroach upon States' Rights, beyond that granted by the Constitution, than the States have to overthrow *its* authority. In either case it would be revolution.

A State, therefore, is independent of the

Federal Government in its own domain, nor does it derive its powers from the latter; but the moment it gets beyond its own boundary its authority ceases, and it comes in contact with Federal authority. In fact, a State has no power whatever beyond its own bounds. It cannot even pursue and bring back an escaped criminal from another State without National authority; it cannot deny to citizens from another State the privileges and immunities extended to its own citizens; it cannot lay the smallest tax, or tariff of any kind upon the imports from another State. While the States, as we have noticed, enjoy domestic independence, they have no foreign relations whatever, not even with one another. Indeed, in practice, aside from demanding and giving up fugitives from justice, the States have little to do with each other. They are almost as far apart in their political relations as they were in colonial times, the chief difference being that now their governments are far more uniform and their common allegiance has been transferred from the British Crown to a Union of their own making.

The relation of the Nation to the States has been compared to that of a parent to the child; but the comparison is ill-chosen. The parent has an original, inherent right to train and command the child in every honorable way; but the Nation has no such power over the States, and what power it has is not inherent and not original. A better comparison would be with the relation between a teacher and pupil. A teacher has real authority over the pupil; she directs his studies, teaches him good manners, and has power to command him in many ways; but her authority is limited, is delegated, and exists only by virtue of a contract for a specified time. Outside of school hours she has no power over the child, and even during school hours her authority is not absolute. She has no right to eat the child's dinner, nor to rob him of anything that is his. So with the General Government: it has real authority over the whole people, but that authority is limited, is delegated, and exists only by the virtue of a written bond; but, unlike that of the teacher, it has no time limit; it is perpetual. As the teacher has no

power over the pupil outside of school hours, so the Nation has no right to command the citizens in matters that concern the State only. As the teacher has not absolute power over the pupil even in the schoolroom, so the Nation has not absolute power over any law-abiding citizen. The President of the United States has no more right to command you or me in time of peace than we have to command him, nor could the unanimous vote of both Houses of Congress confer such power upon him.

We live under a vast dual system, the first of its kind in human history, though since 1848 the Swiss government is very similar to our own, and there are also some points of similarity in the more recently formed German Empire and in some other countries. Our system is not an arbitrary arrangement; it is a natural growth. The power of the States comes down to us from colonial days, the State constitutions being but modifications of the royal charters, while the powers of the Federal Government, though conferred at a later date, were nevertheless necessary. When the

Constitution was framed it was impossible and undesirable to obliterate State lines and to create a consolidated government, while a mere confederation of States, which they already had, was equally undesirable and could not be permanent. Our federal system, therefore, was not only natural, but necessary.

Advantages of the Federal System

A question here is pertinent: What are the advantages of the federal system? and another: Is it the best system for our American government? To the first I would answer, The advantages are many, a few of which we notice. Our government is exceedingly complex in its working. This is an advantage of the greatest value. The simpler some things are, the better, but not so with the government of a great nation. It ought to be so complex that no one man or small body of men can grasp, or comprehend, or manage it. This should be the work of the multitude, and so it is in this country.

Let me quote a few words from Webster on this point. "Nothing is more deceptive or

more dangerous than the pretence of a desire to simplify government. The simplest governments are despotisms; the next simplest, limited monarchies. Every free government is necessarily complicated. If we abolish the distinction of branches and have but one branch; if we abolish jury trials and leave all to the judge; if we then ordain that the legislator shall be himself that judge; if we place the executive power in the same hands, we may readily simplify government. We may easily bring it to the simplest of all possible forms, a pure despotism. But a separation of departments, so far as practicable, and the preservation of clear lines between them, is the fundamental idea in the creation of all our constitutions."

This complexity of government, this distribution of power among all the people, is the chief corner-stone of our federal system. It not only secures the personal attention and interest of the common citizen in the making and enforcing of laws, thus educating him in political wisdom, as Professor Macy puts it, but it also provides better local laws. The

people of any neighborhood know better what local laws they need, how to frame and execute them, than does the far-away power of a central government. And also where the people have a hand in the making of their own laws and carrying on their own government, patriotism is everywhere fostered, for where a man's treasure is, there will his heart be also.

In Russia the common people know and care little or nothing about their government. They only know that there is a great central Power at St. Petersburg that pervades the whole nation, from which emanates all law, and they have nothing to do with the laws except to obey them. They are like untutored children or dumb driven cattle, in governmental affairs; and should anything occur to destroy the central government they would be helpless and wholly without ability to govern themselves; while in America the humblest citizen knows something about public affairs, and, should such an emergency arise, there is scarcely a county in any State but could furnish men capable of being governor of the State, and scarcely a State in the Union that

could not furnish a score of men capable of filling the presidential office with an ability equal to that of the average President.

If *our* National Government should be overthrown, the self-governing States would preserve the general equilibrium of power and prevent universal anarchy. They would probably move steadily and serenely on until a new Union could be formed. If Congress were to disband, the President to resign, and our capital to fall into the hands of ruffians and anarchists, the people would be greatly agitated, of course, but the Government as such would not be annihilated, nor perhaps greatly disturbed. Why? Because our system is such that each separate part takes care of itself. If there is serious political disturbance in one or more States, the General Government is not threatened, and for the same reason. We have compared a federal government to a great building with separate compartments, each with its own industry. Such is our government; and if one branch of industry becomes unsettled or ruined, the rest need not be seriously disturbed. Or if the outer walls be

demolished, the various compartments may be preserved until the walls are rebuilt. How impossible this would be in a consolidated government, a living organism in which every part is dependent for its life and existence on the heart, the central life-giving fountain.

Another advantage of the federal system is that the distribution of power among the States simplifies the work of Congress, and enables that body to confine itself to National affairs. Our forty-five States require but little more National legislation than did the original thirteen. An English editor wholly misunderstood the situation when, commenting on the recent admission into the Union of four new States together, he said that it remained to be seen whether the Government could bear such a strain. Indeed, Congress was greatly relieved with their admission into the Union.[1] While in their territorial state Congress had to govern them; but on their admission into the Union, they became of age and self-governing, and Congress has no more to do with them now than with Ohio or New York. Our

[1] Macy's "Our Government," p. 234.

system is such that we can expand and add new States almost indefinitely without endangering the General Government, or scarcely increasing its burdens.

Now, the second question: Is the federal system the best for our American government? My answer is, that it is not only the best, but the only system that could possibly be permanent. A confederation, a league of the States loosely bound together, from which any one has the right to withdraw, could not endure. Such a government would certainly fall apart from its own weight.

On the other hand, a unified, consolidated government would be equally impossible. The country is too vast, and the people too well educated and too independent and jealous of their liberties to submit to any central all-pervading authority, or to permit their local affairs to be managed by other hands than their own.

States' Rights

I have said that States' Rights constitute one of our great bulwarks of liberty as a

nation. We know that the tendency of human government is toward the monarchial. This is not usually a natural or gradual tendency. It goes by sudden bounds, and is caused by the vast difference in the qualities of leadership in men, and by man's universal thirst for power. It is true, not because the people desire it, but because they are led and driven by some commanding genius. The most conspicuous examples in history are those of Cæsar, who transformed the Roman Republic into a monarchy, and of Napoleon, who, with his transcendent powers of leadership, seized in his fatal grasp the new-born Republic of France, and became its absolute monarch within a few years after the blood-bought liberties of the people had been secured. And even to-day the Republic of France is so solidified that a second Napoleon, should one arise, would not find it difficult to seize the reigns of government and merge it into a monarchy and despotism.

But such a transformation would be impossible in the United States, and one of the greatest safeguards against it is found in

States' Rights. Be it remembered that only a part of the vast power of the people has been delegated to the General Government. The States are the residuaries of power. Suppose one of our leaders in National politics to be a Napoleon in ability and in selfish ambition. Even suppose him to be President of the United States (though it would be far more difficult for such a man to reach that position than for an ordinary statesman), and to conspire with Congress and to secure their support in an attempt to overthrow the Republic and set up a monarchy with himself at its head. What would be the result? He would instantly come into contact with forty-five powerful State governments, — some of them more powerful than the minor European monarchies, — and upon this rock he would be dashed to pieces. It would require a greater man than Cæsar or Napoleon to accomplish such an end, and a man less wise than either would be too wise to undertake so hopeless a task. Let me repeat, the States are the residuaries of power in America, and States' Rights is the chief corner-stone of our fabric of free government.

Let no true American belittle States' Rights. It is true that before the war, for years, the term was identified with State Sovereignty, and in common parlance it referred to but one supposed right of the States — the right of secession. The term was abused and misused until it almost became an offence to the honest, patriotic citizen; but that time is past, the bone of contention is removed, and the States have again resumed their normal position in the great structure of the National Government. Every true-hearted American who studies this intricate problem, the relation of the States and the Nation, will plainly see that the hand of Providence has been over it all, and while he will rejoice in our grand and glorious Union, he will take scarcely less pride in States' Rights, the great palladium of our liberty.

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